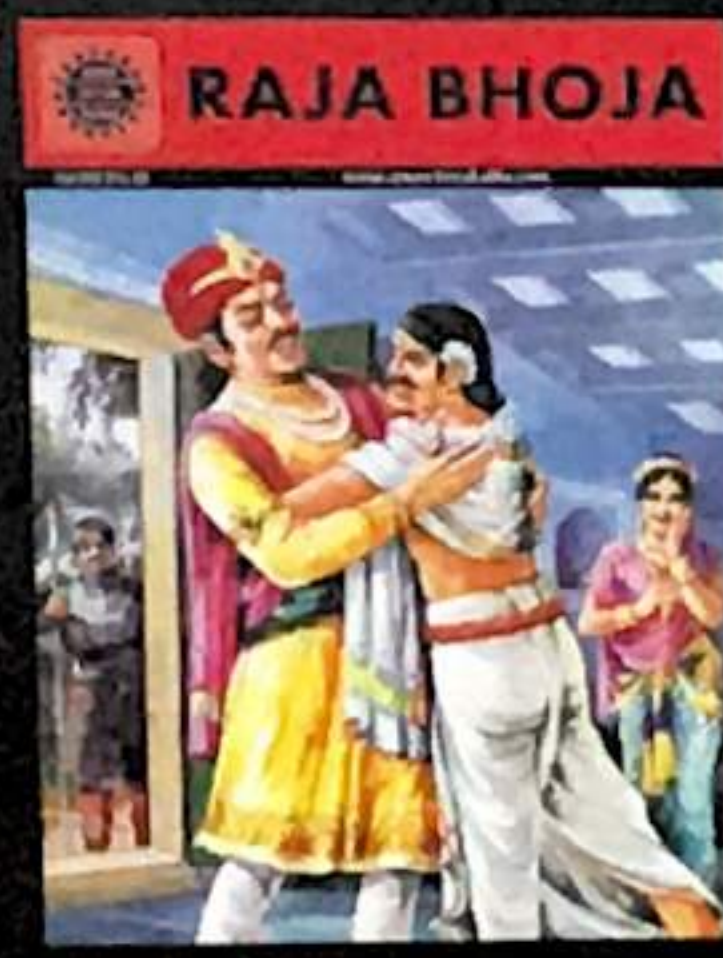
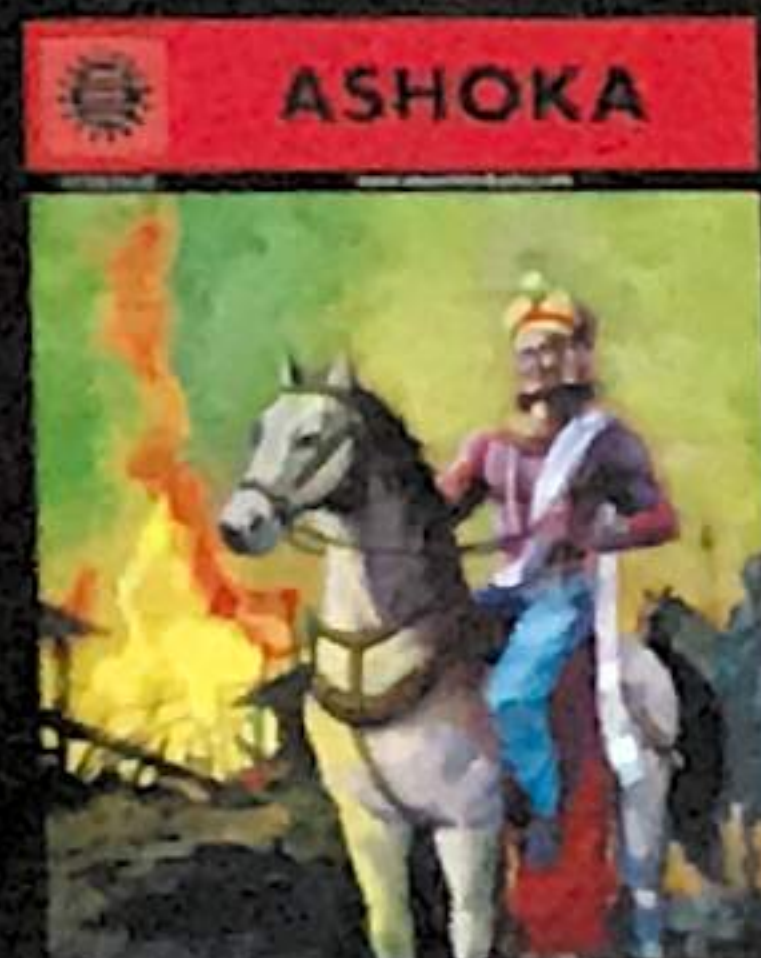


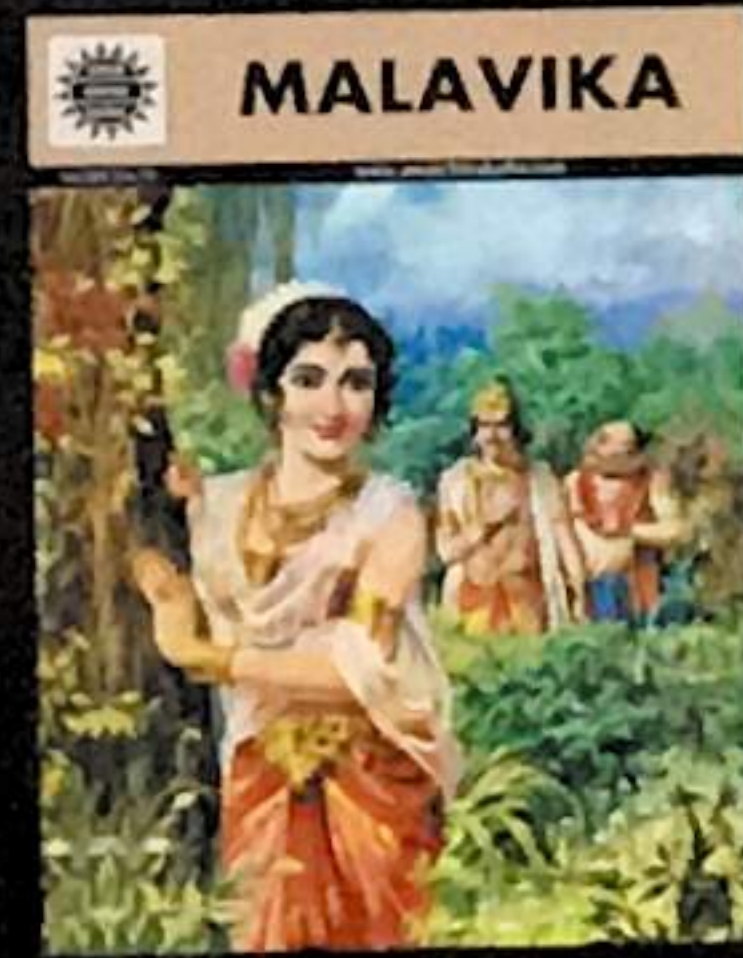
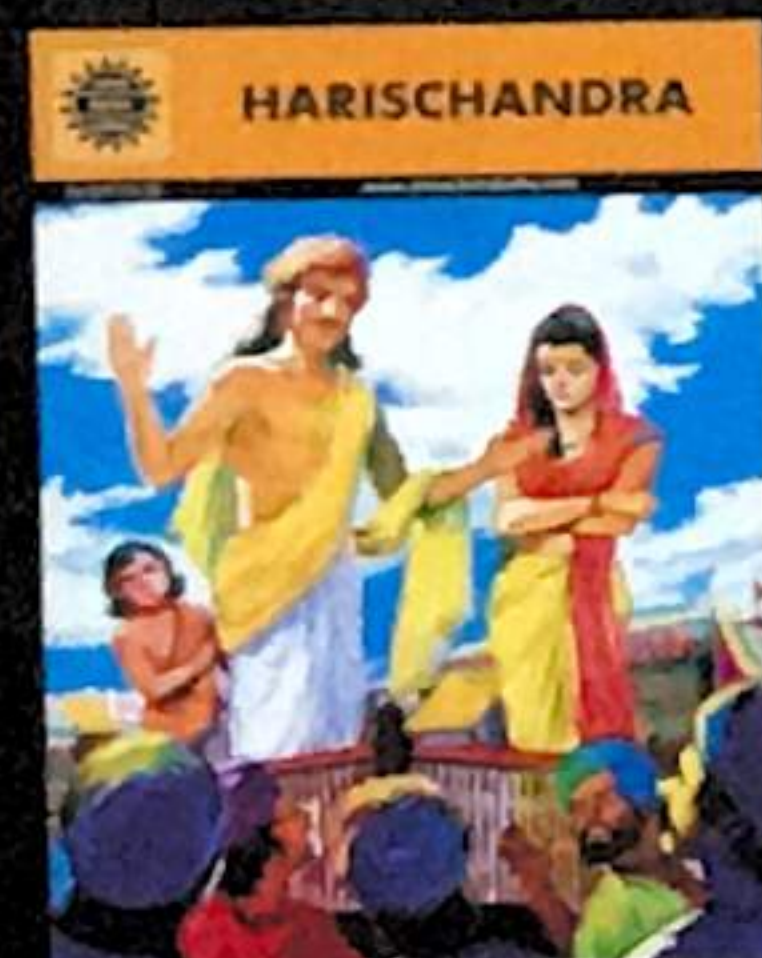
RAJA RAJA CHOLA

Arul Mozhi Varman was the younger son of the king of Thanjavur. Quiet, firm and dependable he won the heart of every person he met. However, it was his hot-headed brother who was heir to the throne. But no one could stand in the way of what destiny had in store for the young prince. By the strangest twists of fate, Arul ascended the throne as Raja Raja Chola, and proved to be one of the greatest rulers in the history of medieval India. During his 30-year-reign the Chola empire not only became a formidable maritime power but was also a hub of art and architecture.

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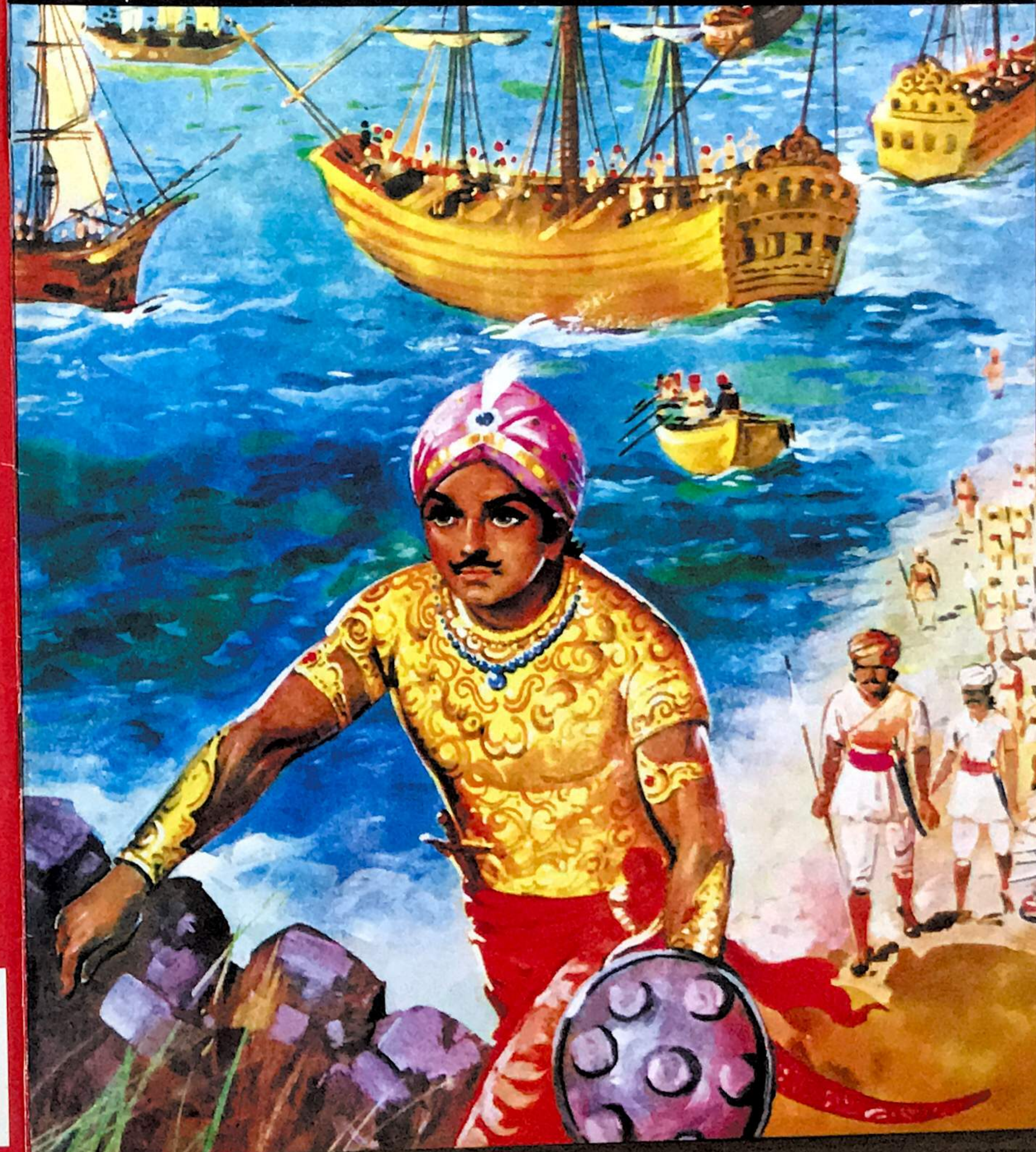
BRAVEHEARTS



RAJA RAJA CHOLA

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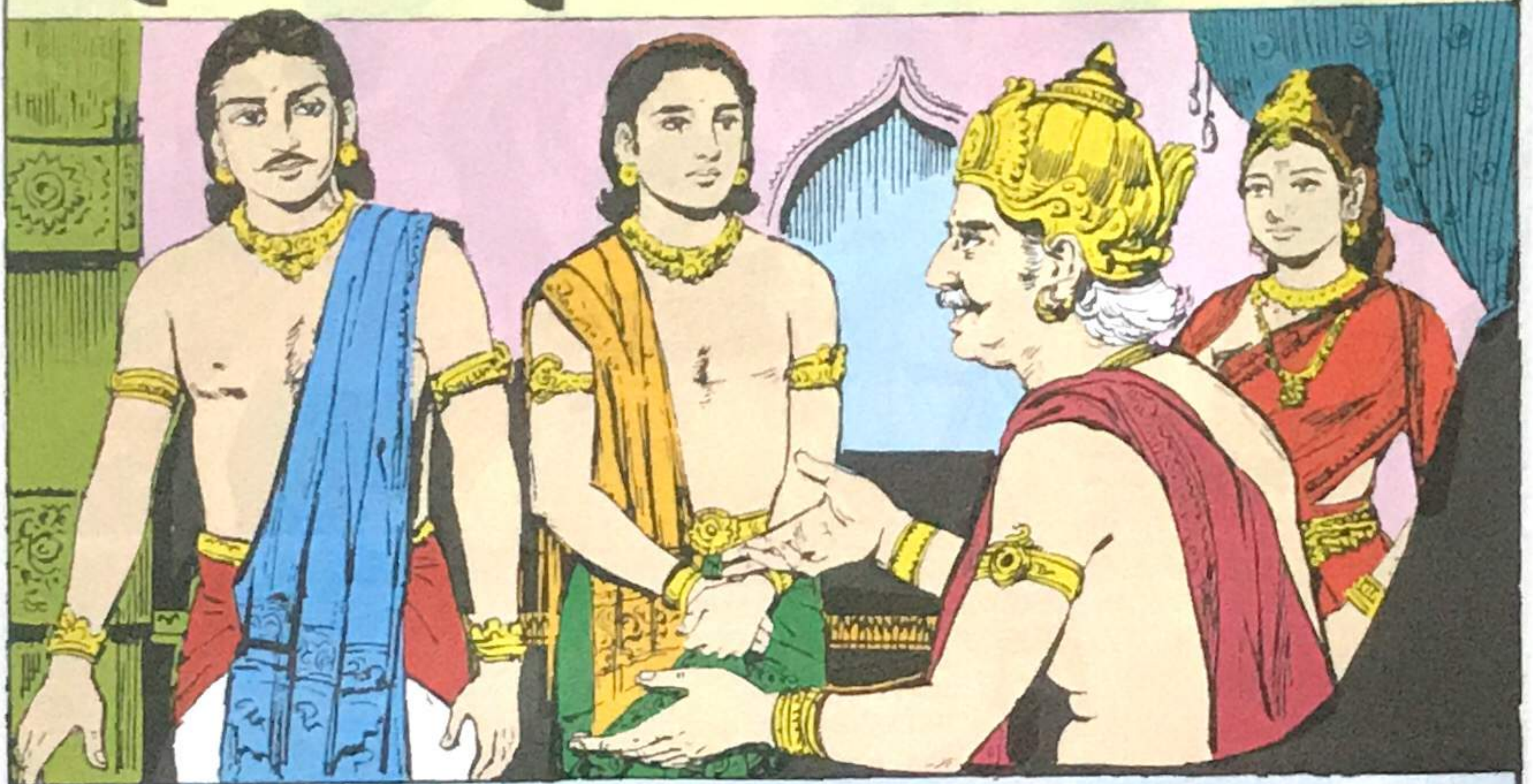


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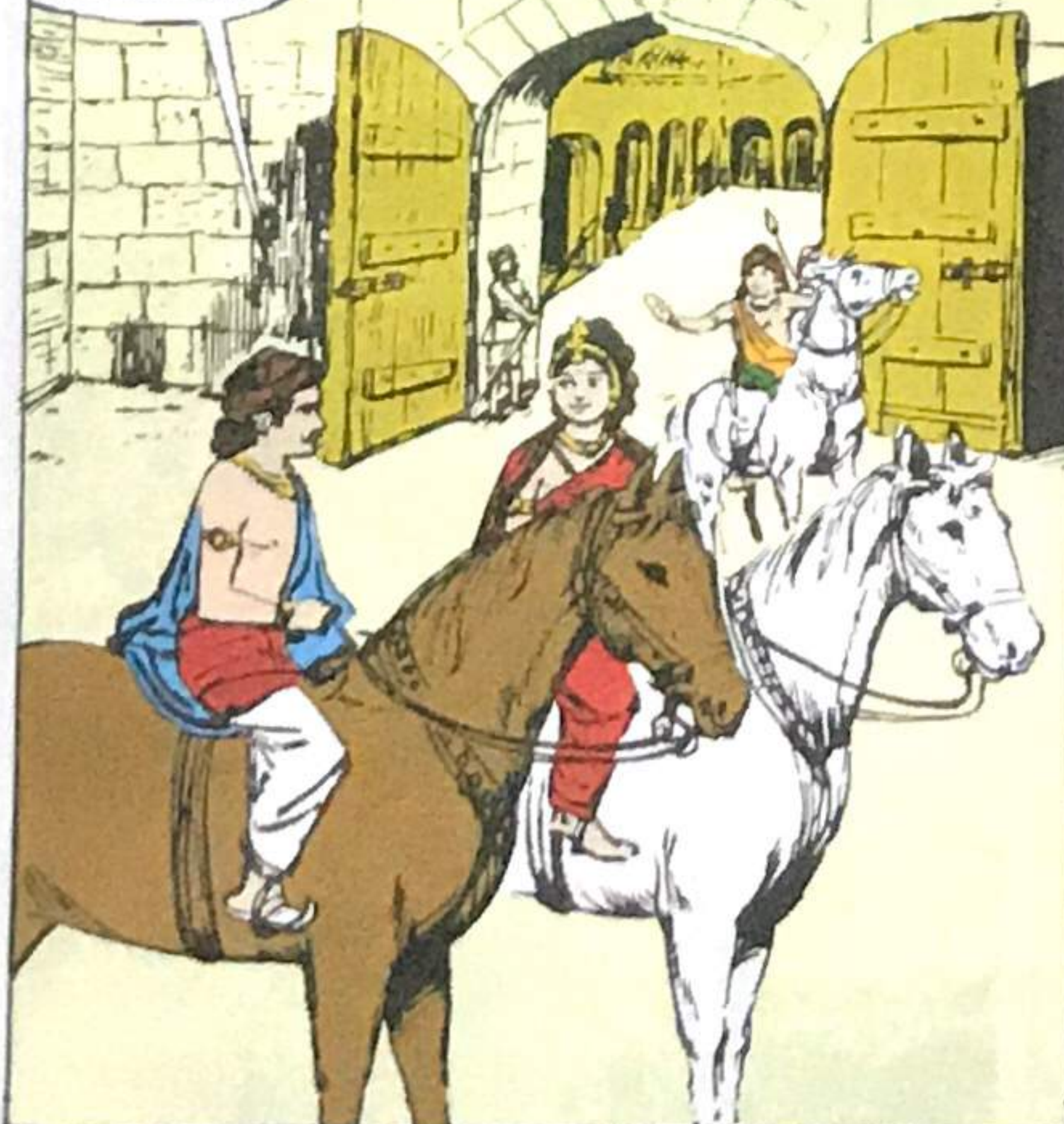
RAJA RAJA CHOLA



ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, PARANTAKA CHOLA II RULED OVER TANJAVUR IN SOUTH INDIA. HE HAD THREE CHILDREN, ADITYA KARIKALAN, ARUL MOZHI VERMAN AND KUNDAVAI.

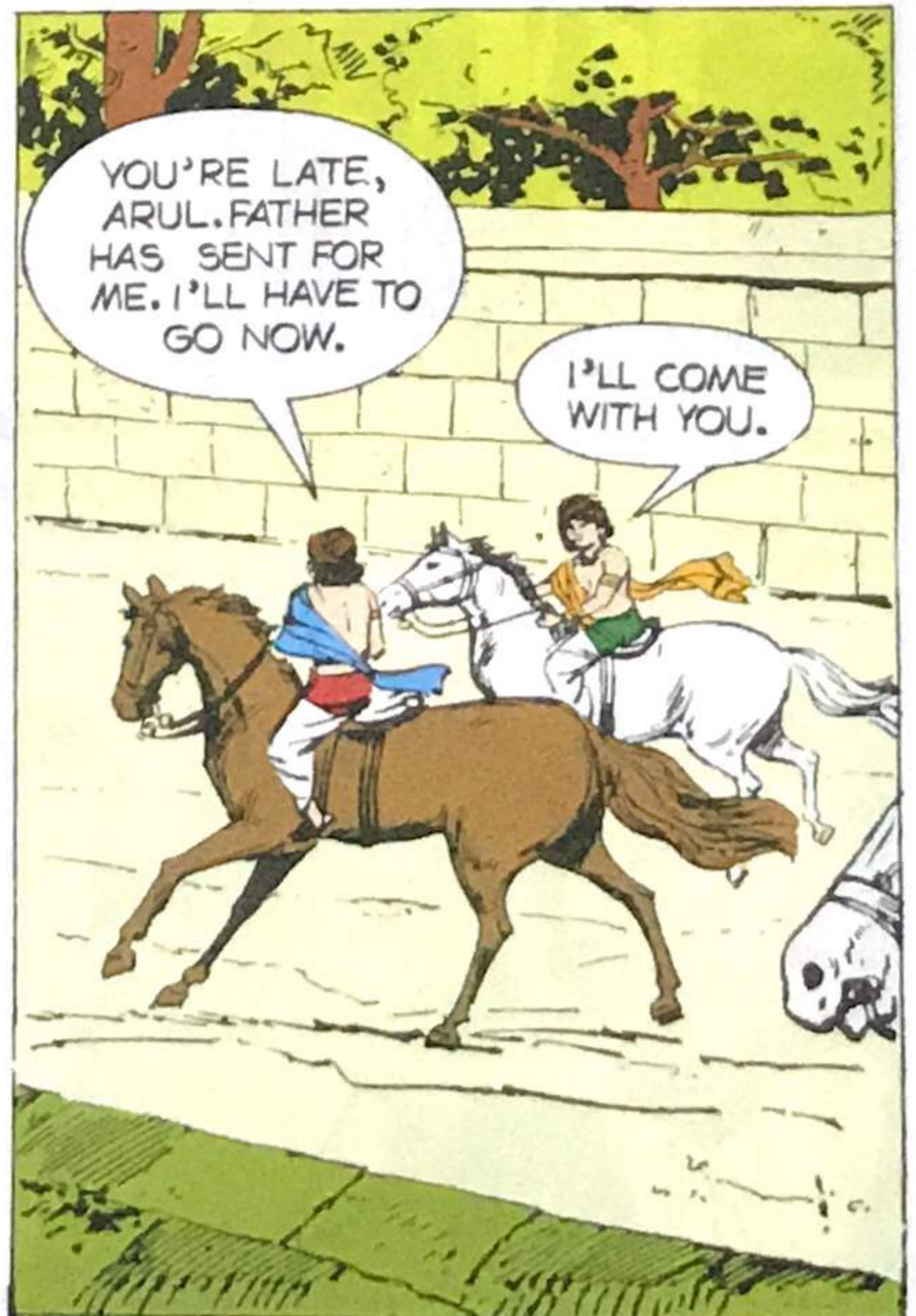
BOTH KARIKALAN AND KUNDAVAI LOVED THEIR YOUNGER BROTHER.

AH! THERE HE COMES!
HOW WELL HE RIDES!

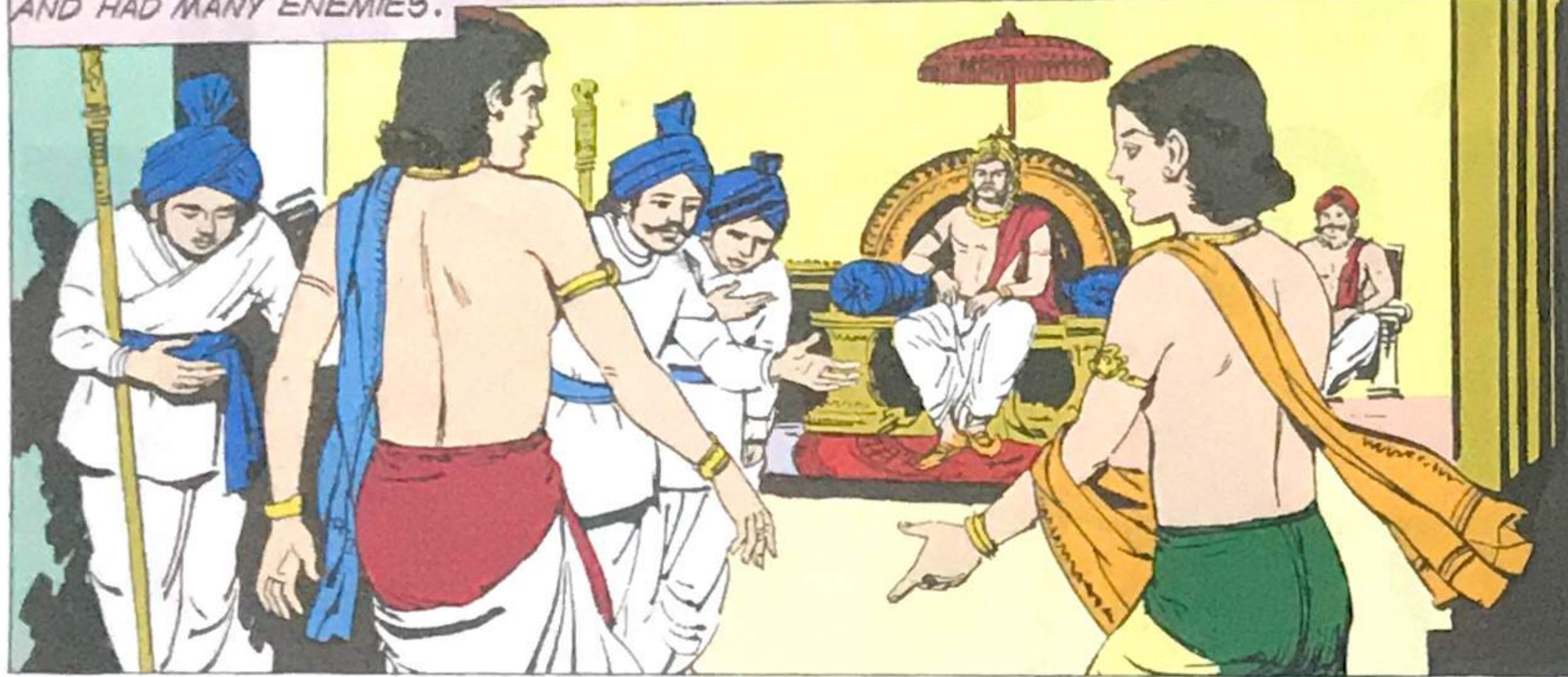


YOU'RE LATE,
ARUL. FATHER
HAS SENT FOR
ME. I'LL HAVE TO
GO NOW.

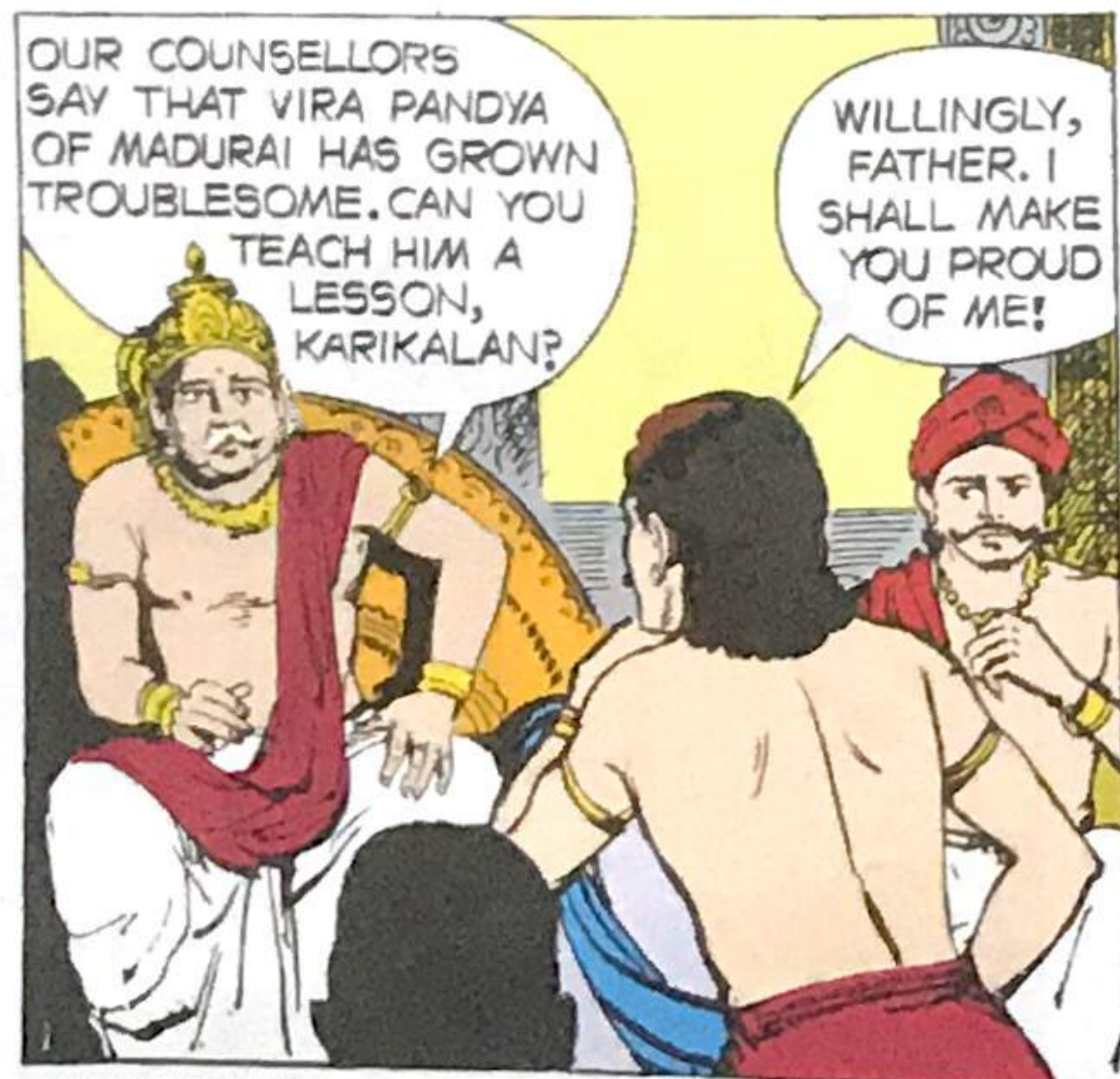
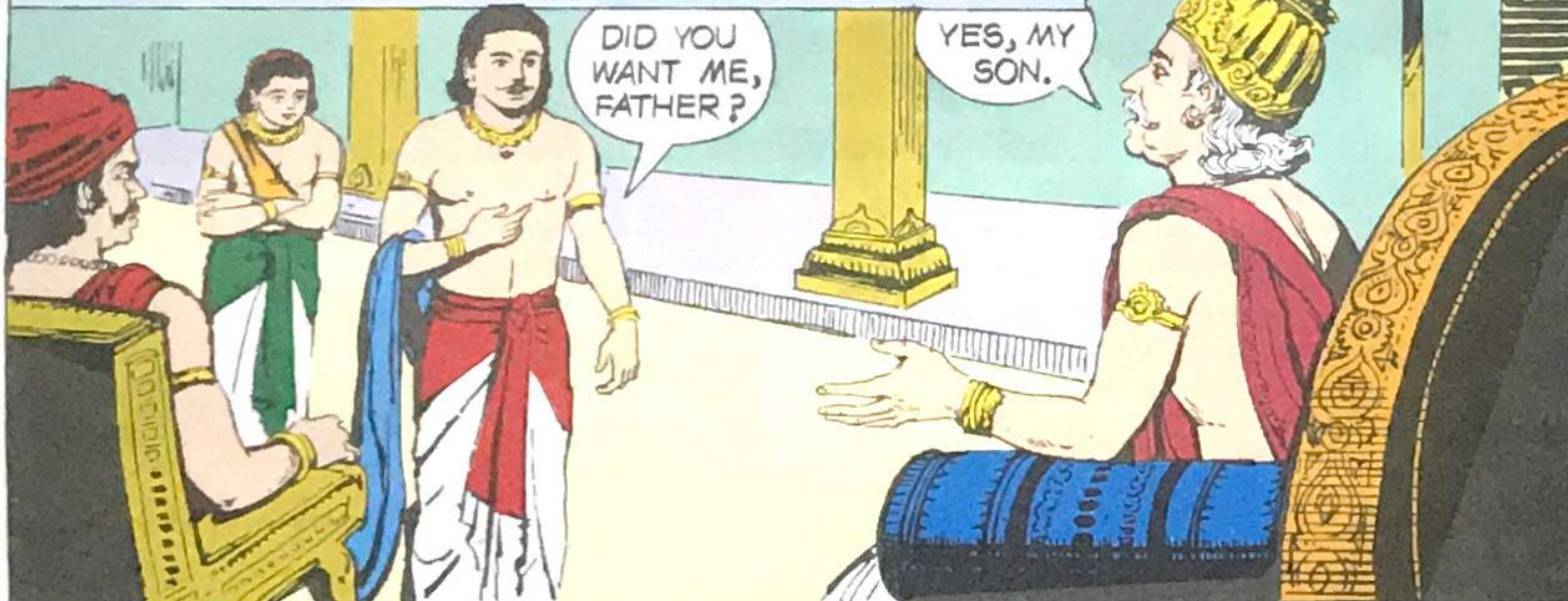
I'LL COME
WITH YOU.



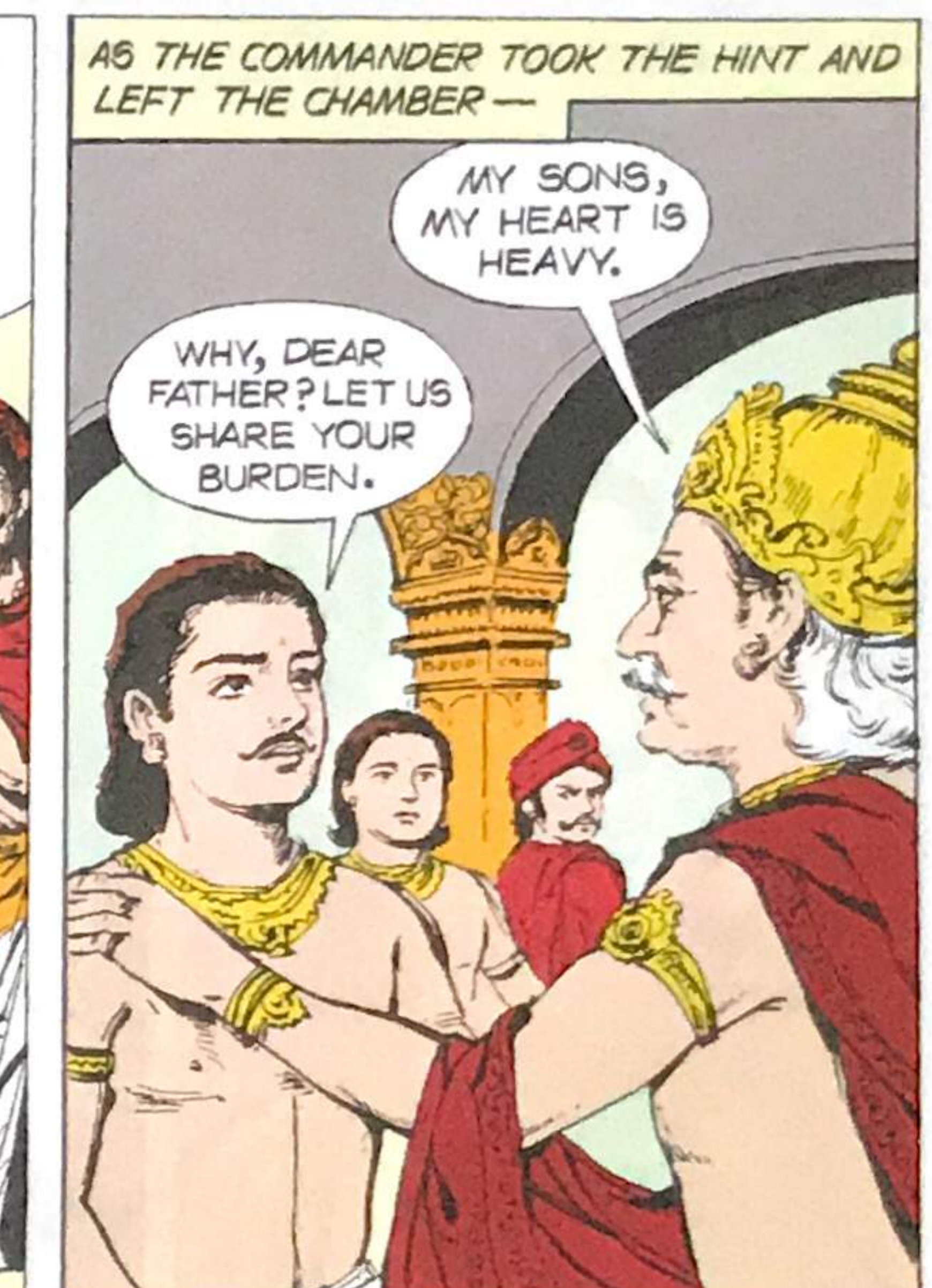
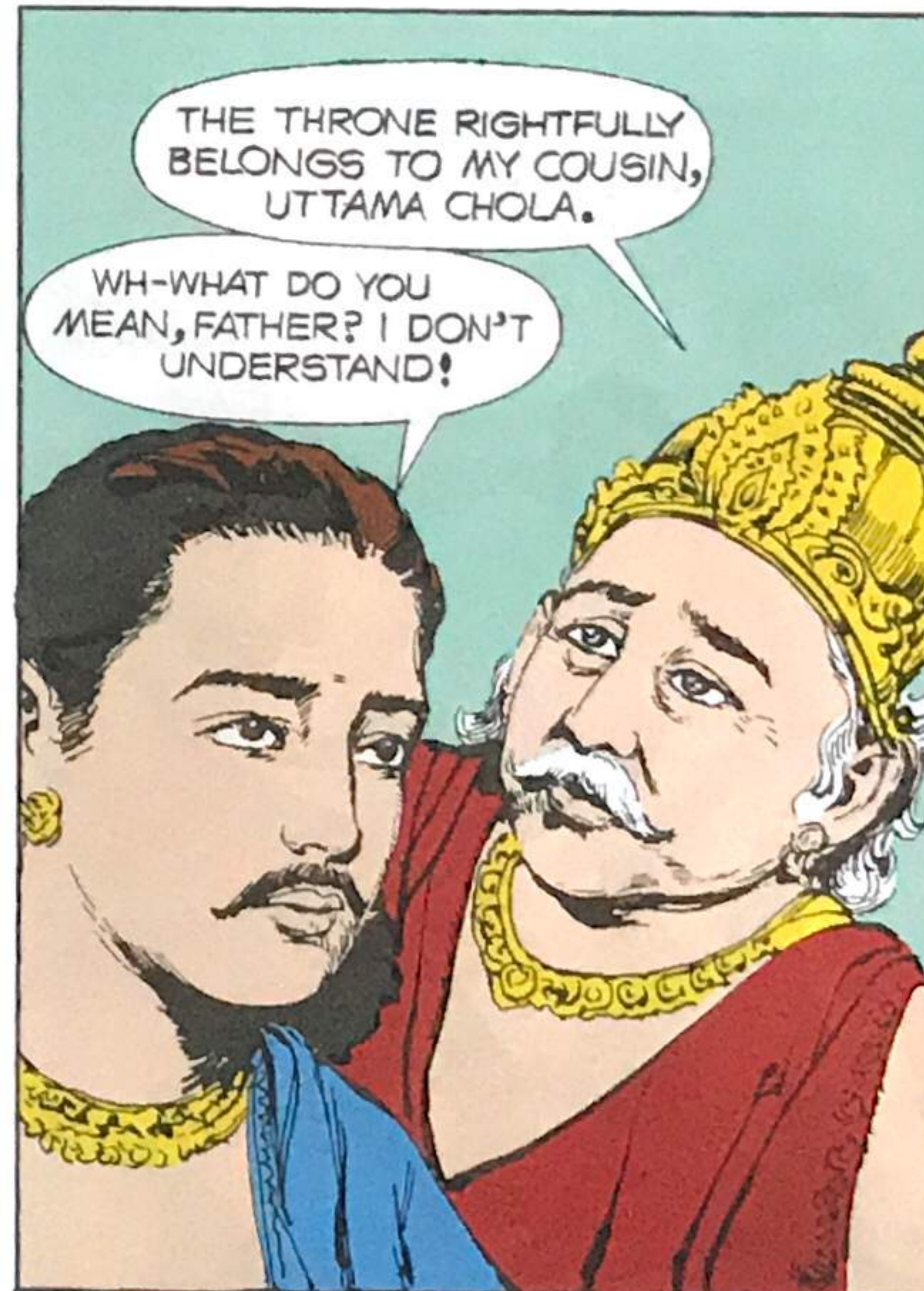
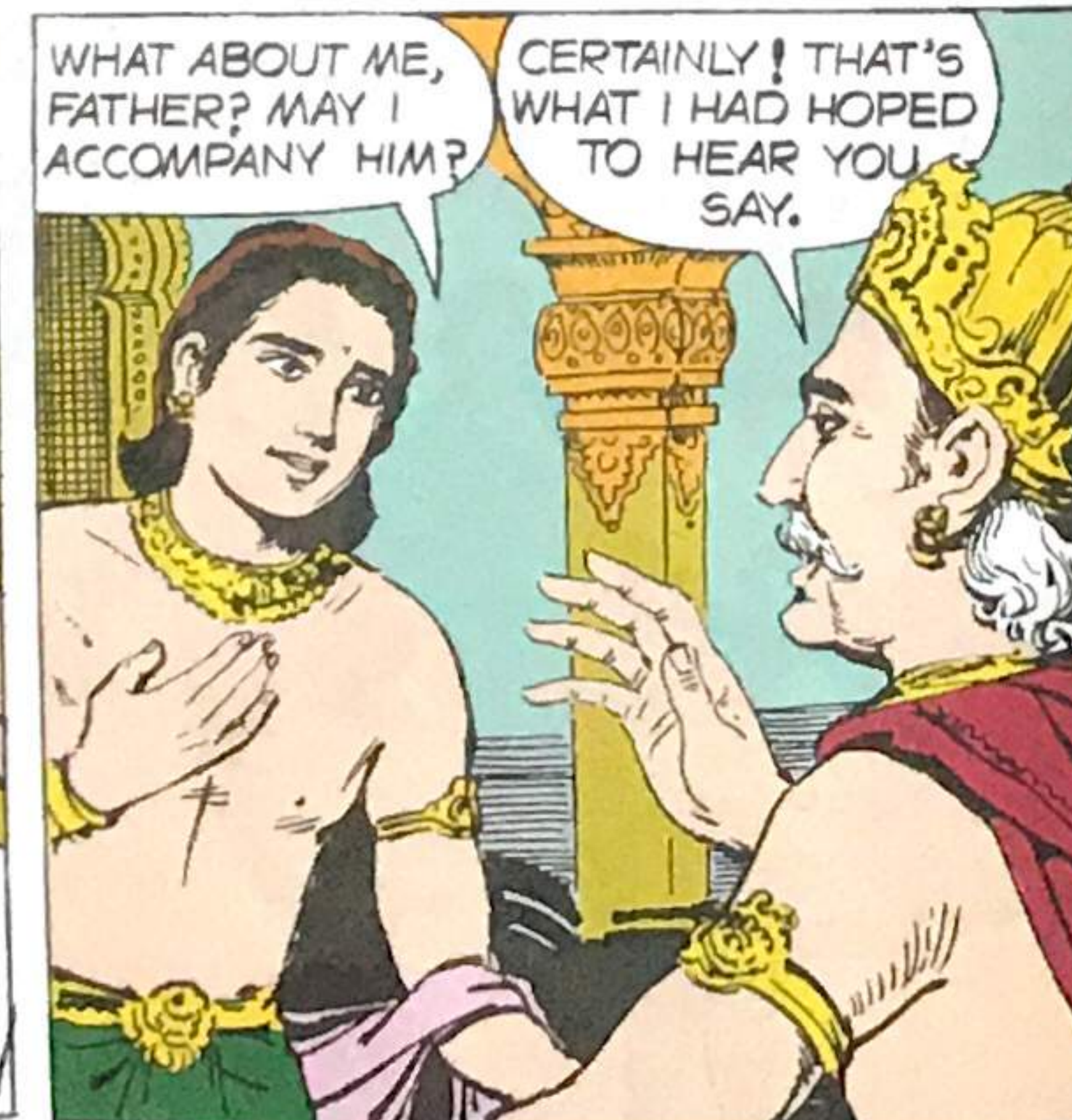
YUVARAJA *KARIKALAN WAS AN AGGRESSIVE AND ARROGANT YOUTH. HE WAS UNPOPULAR AND HAD MANY ENEMIES.



THE WORST OF THEM WAS THE COMMANDER OF PARANTAKA'S ARMY. HE GLARED AT KARIKALAN AS HE STOOD BEFORE THE KING.



* CROWN PRINCE

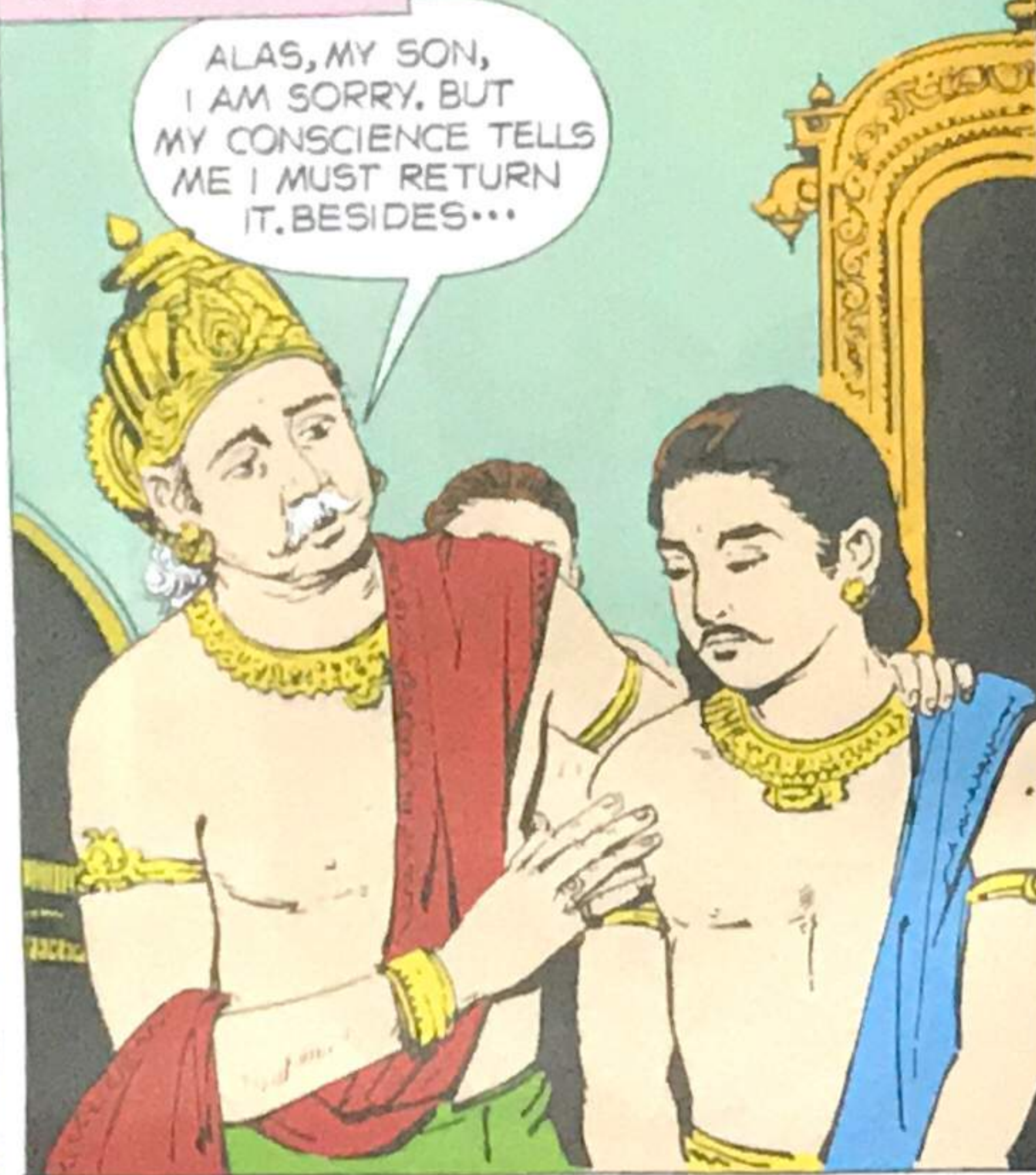


ARUL ANSWERED HIS QUERY.

OBEY FATHER'S WISHES.

PARANTAKA COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE KARIKALAN'S CRESTFALLEN FACE.

ALAS, MY SON, I AM SORRY. BUT MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME I MUST RETURN IT. BESIDES...



... HE HAS MANY STRONG SUPPORTERS— AMONG THEM THE COMMANDER OF OUR ARMY AND HIS WIFE, NANDINI. AND THEY HATE YOU.

PLEASE GIVE ME LEAVE TO GO AWAY AND THINK OVER WHAT YOU'VE SAID, FATHER.



FOLLOWED BY ARUL, KARIKALAN WENT TO KUNDAVAI, AND UNBURDENED HIS HEART.

... THIS MEANS THAT I SHALL NOT SUCCEED FATHER.

DO NOT FRET, DEAR BROTHER.



WHEN YOU COME BACK VICTORIOUS FROM BATTLE, THE PEOPLE WILL CLAMOUR FOR YOU. THE COWARD UTTAMA WILL NOT STAND A CHANCE.



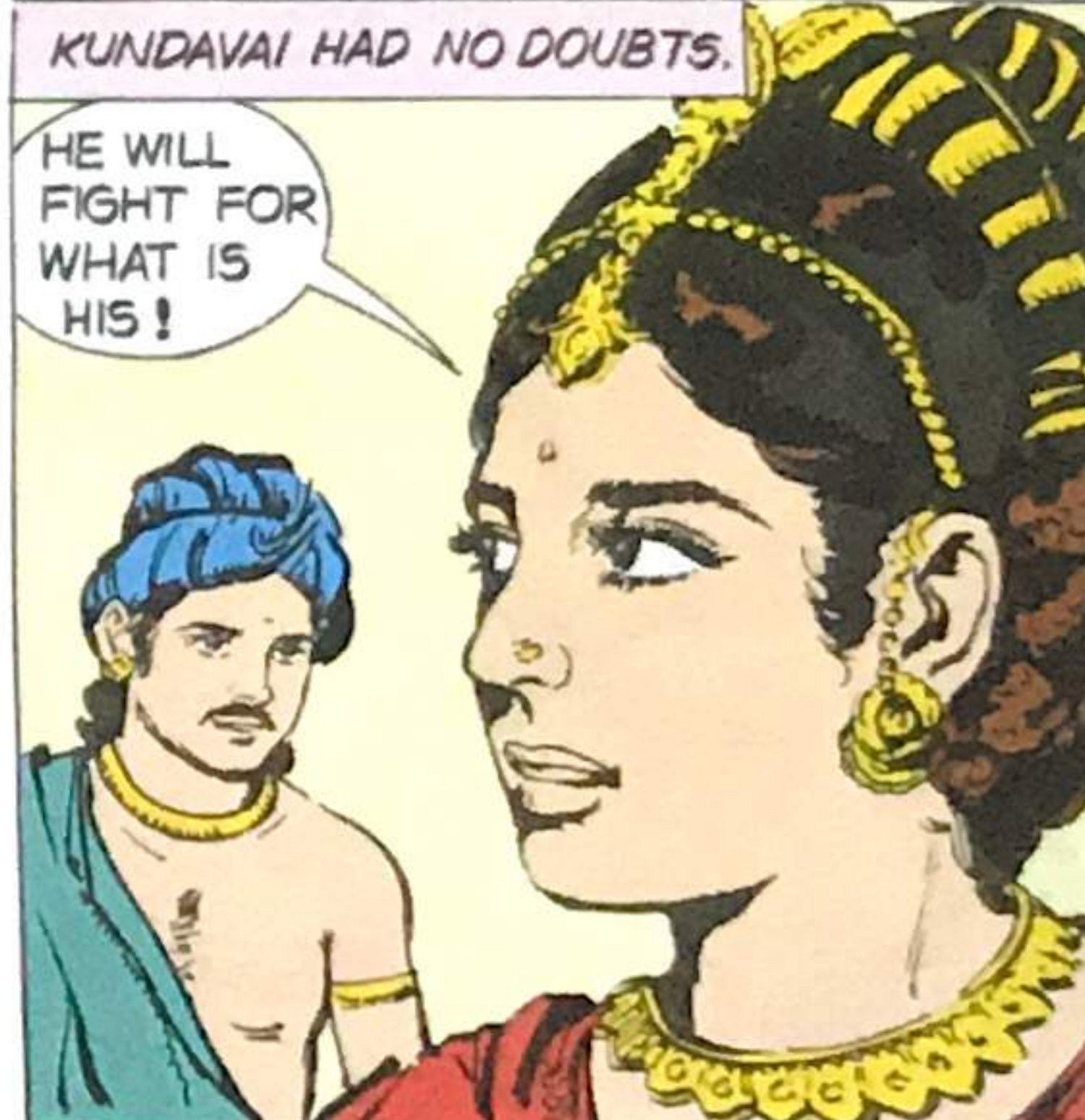
AT THAT MOMENT, VANDIYA DEVAN, A CLOSE FRIEND OF KARIKALAN, WALKED IN.

AH! THEN THERE IS SOME TRUTH IN THE RUMOURS I'VE HEARD. WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO?



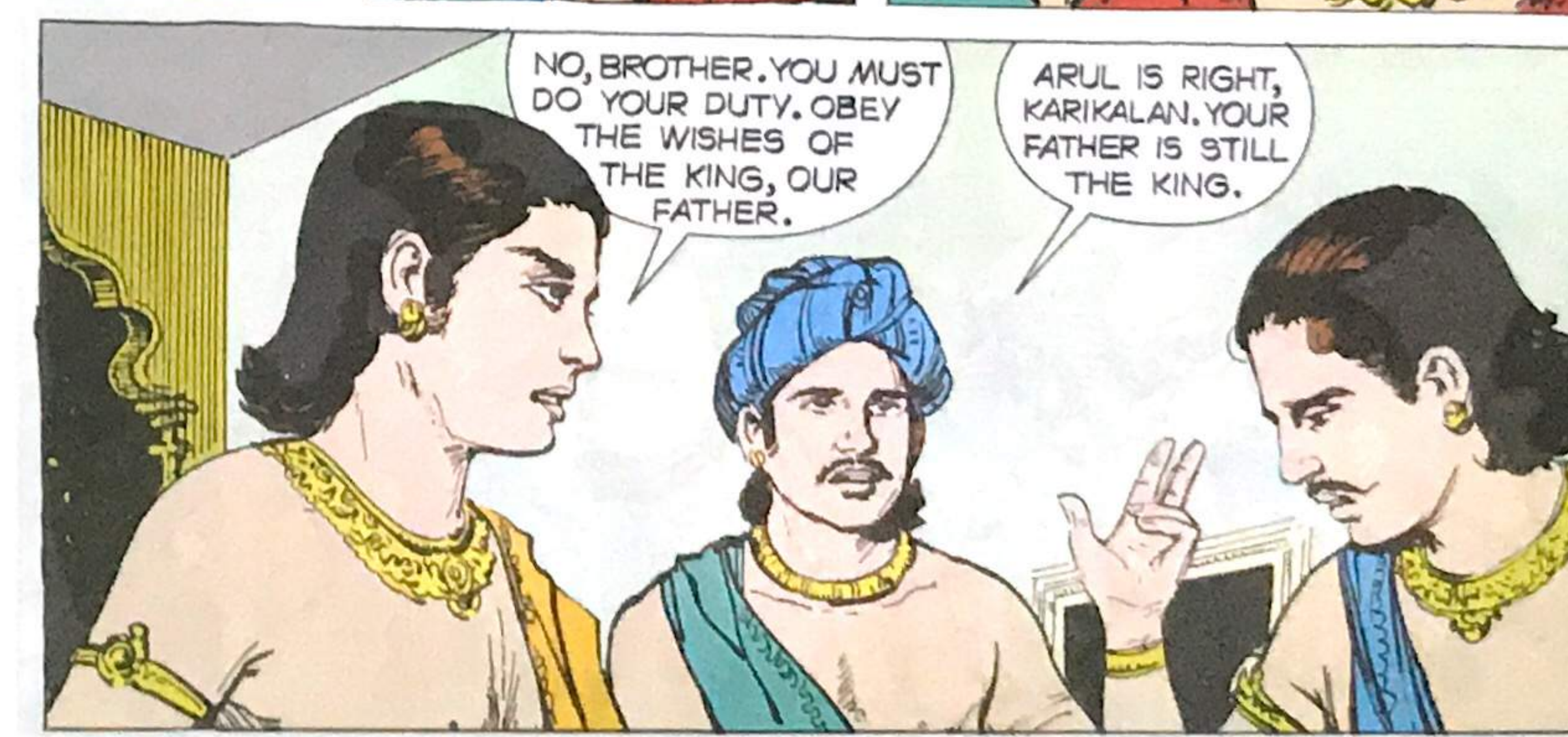
KUNDAVAI HAD NO DOUBTS.

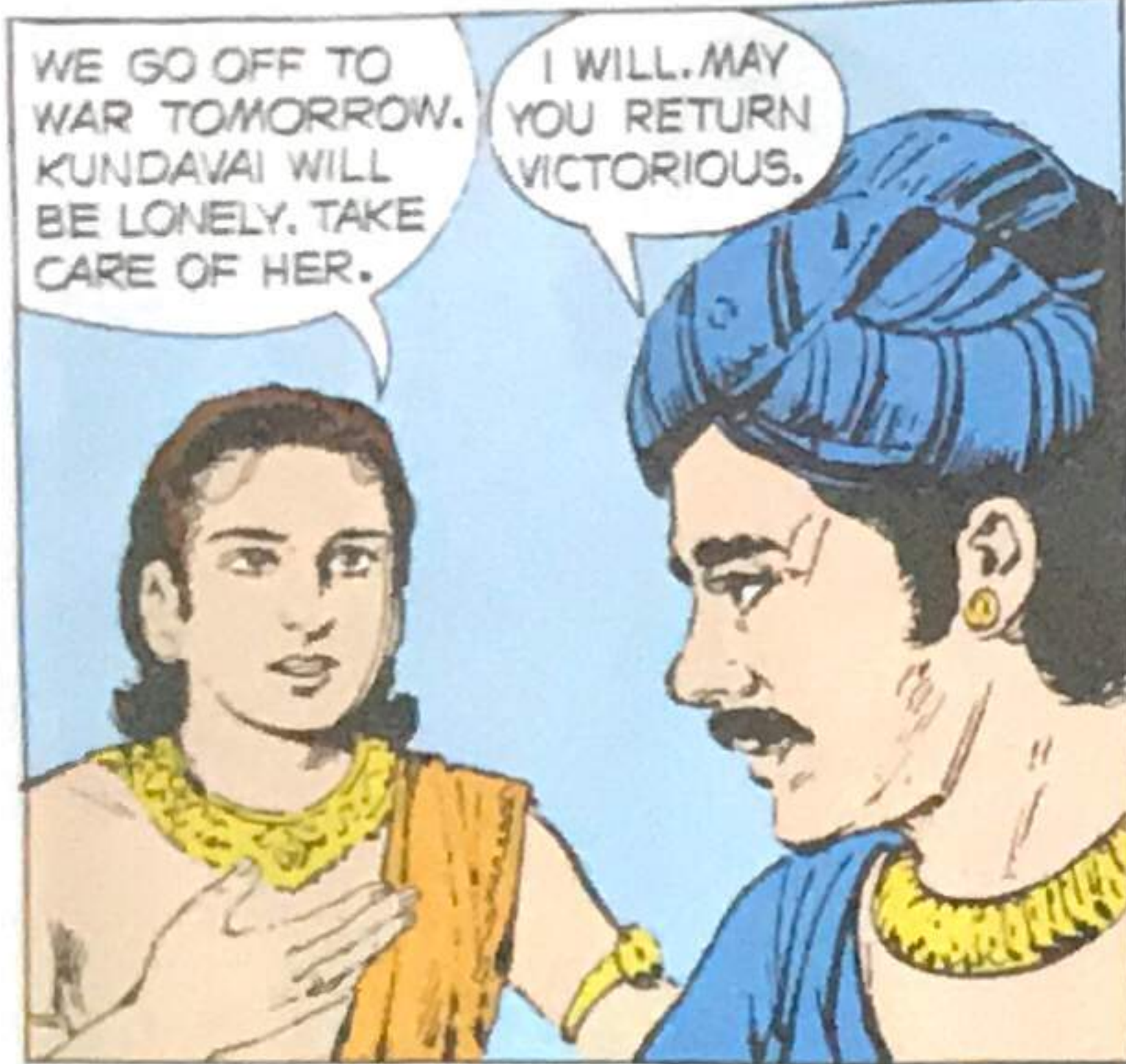
HE WILL FIGHT FOR WHAT IS HIS!



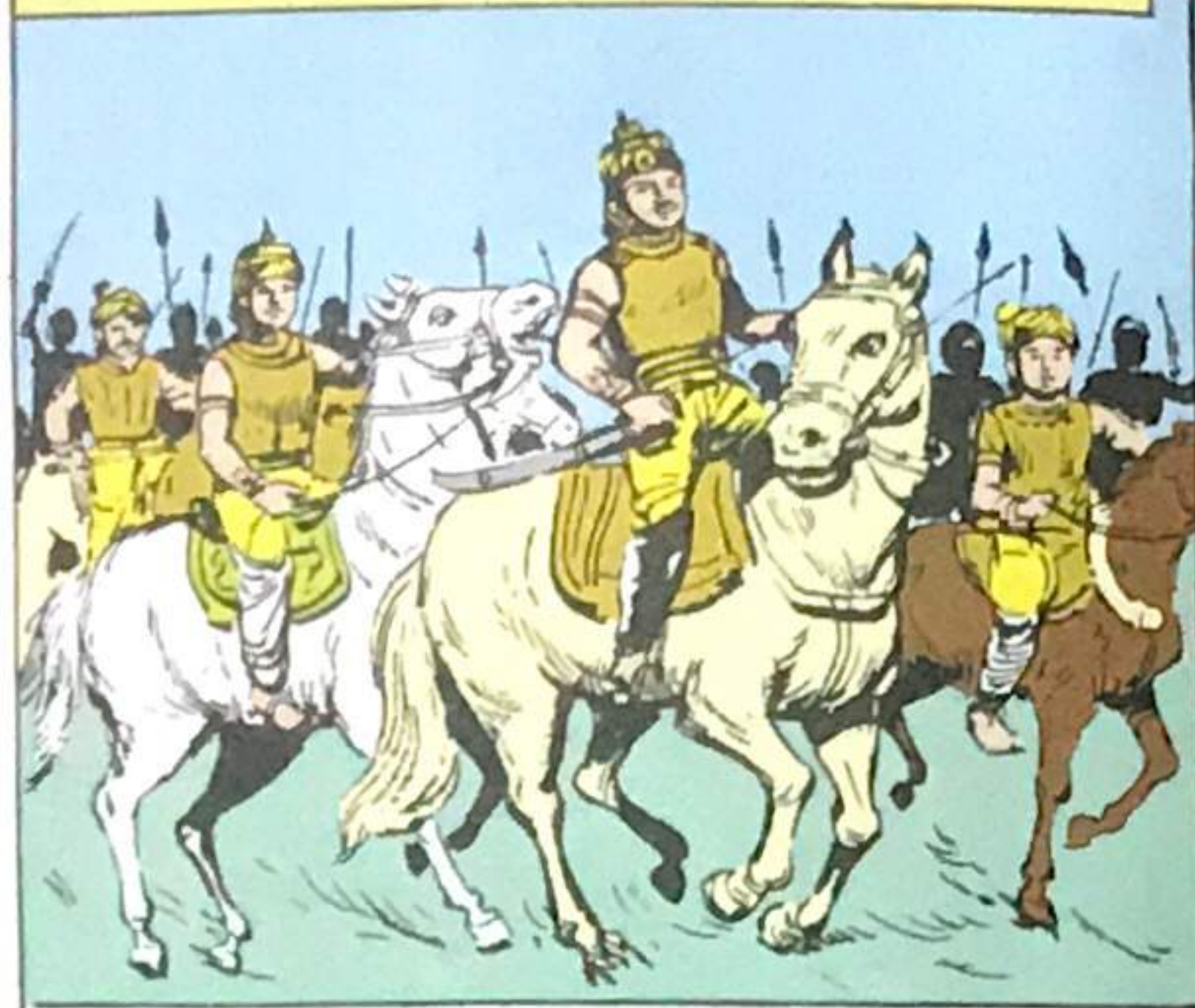
NO, BROTHER. YOU MUST DO YOUR DUTY. OBEY THE WISHES OF THE KING, OUR FATHER.

ARUL IS RIGHT, KARIKALAN. YOUR FATHER IS STILL THE KING.

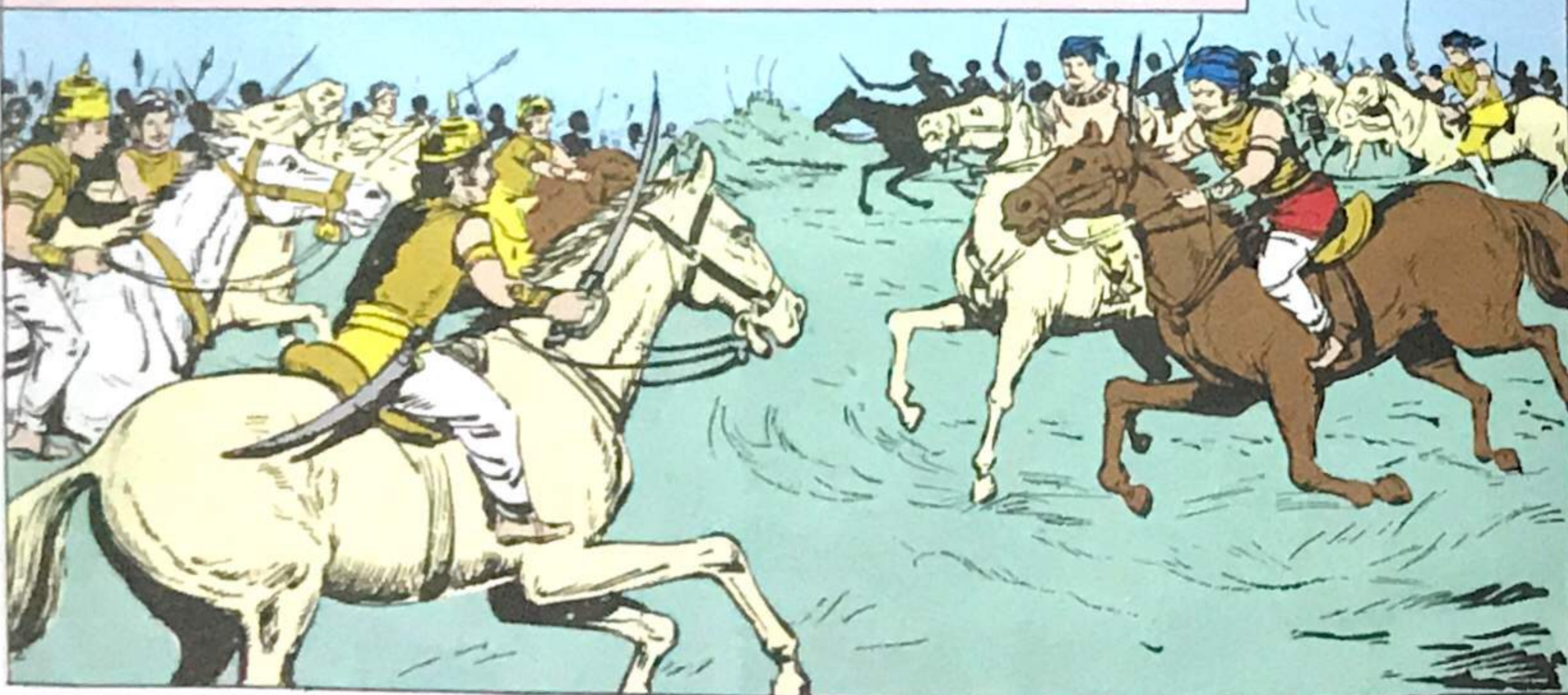




THE NEXT DAY, KARIKALAN AND ARUL RODE OUT TO MADURAI WITH THEIR FORCES.



THE TWO ARMIES MET—THE MIGHTY CHOLAS AND THE VALIANT PANDYAS.



THE BATTLE RAGED THROUGH THE DAY.



KARIKALAN AND ARUL FOUGHT FEARLESSLY, BUT VIRA PANDYA AND HIS MEN PUT UP A STOUT RESISTANCE.



ARUL WAS WORRIED.

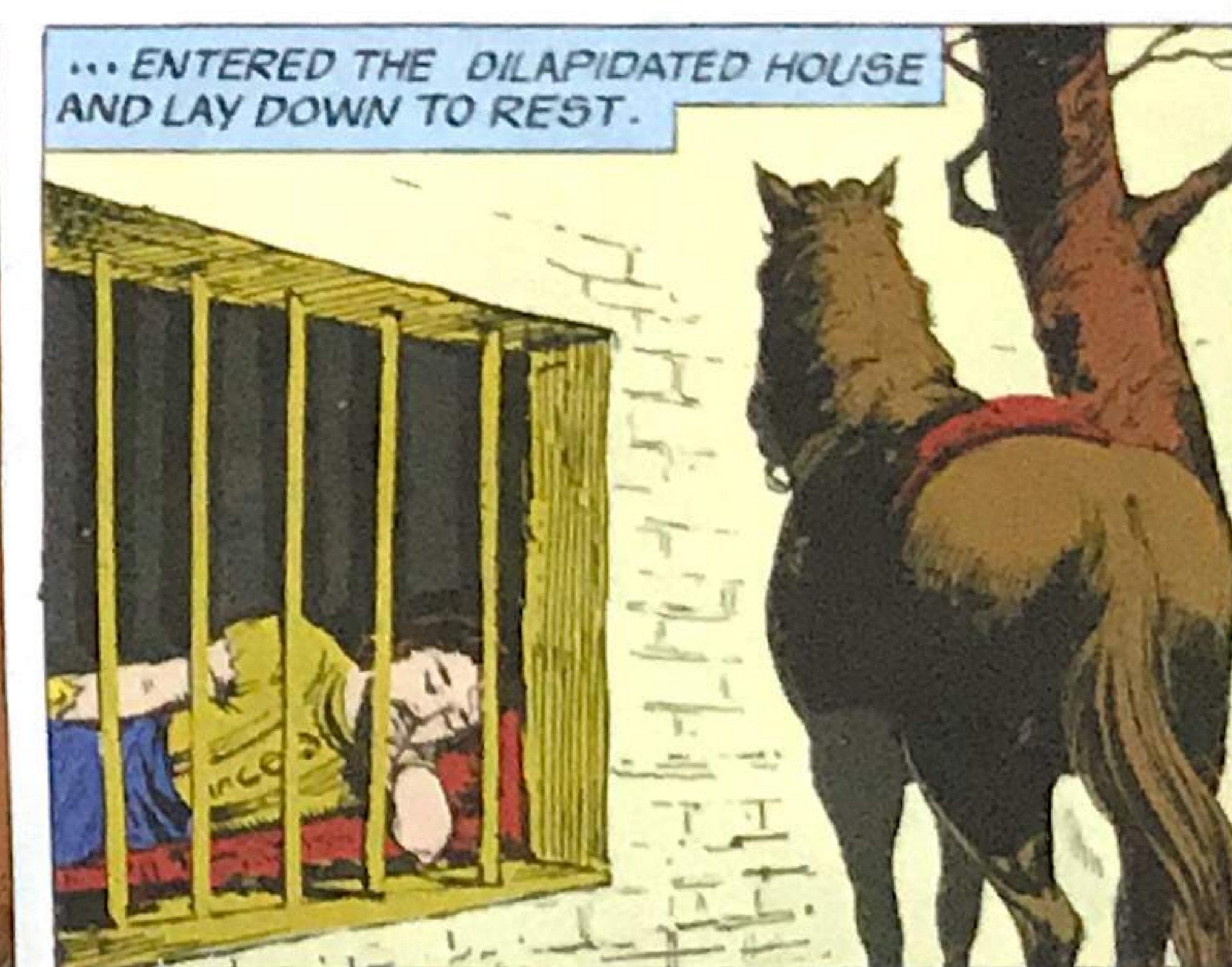
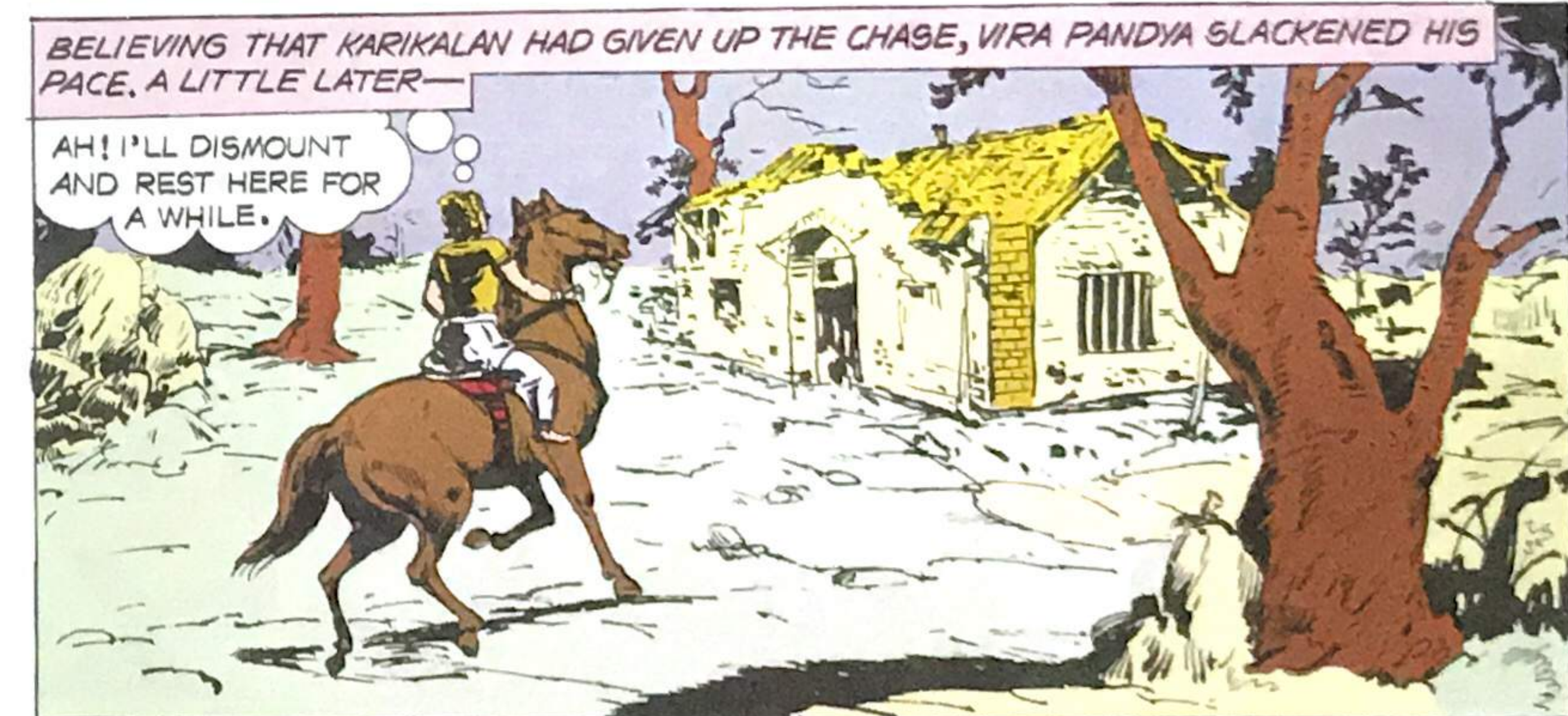
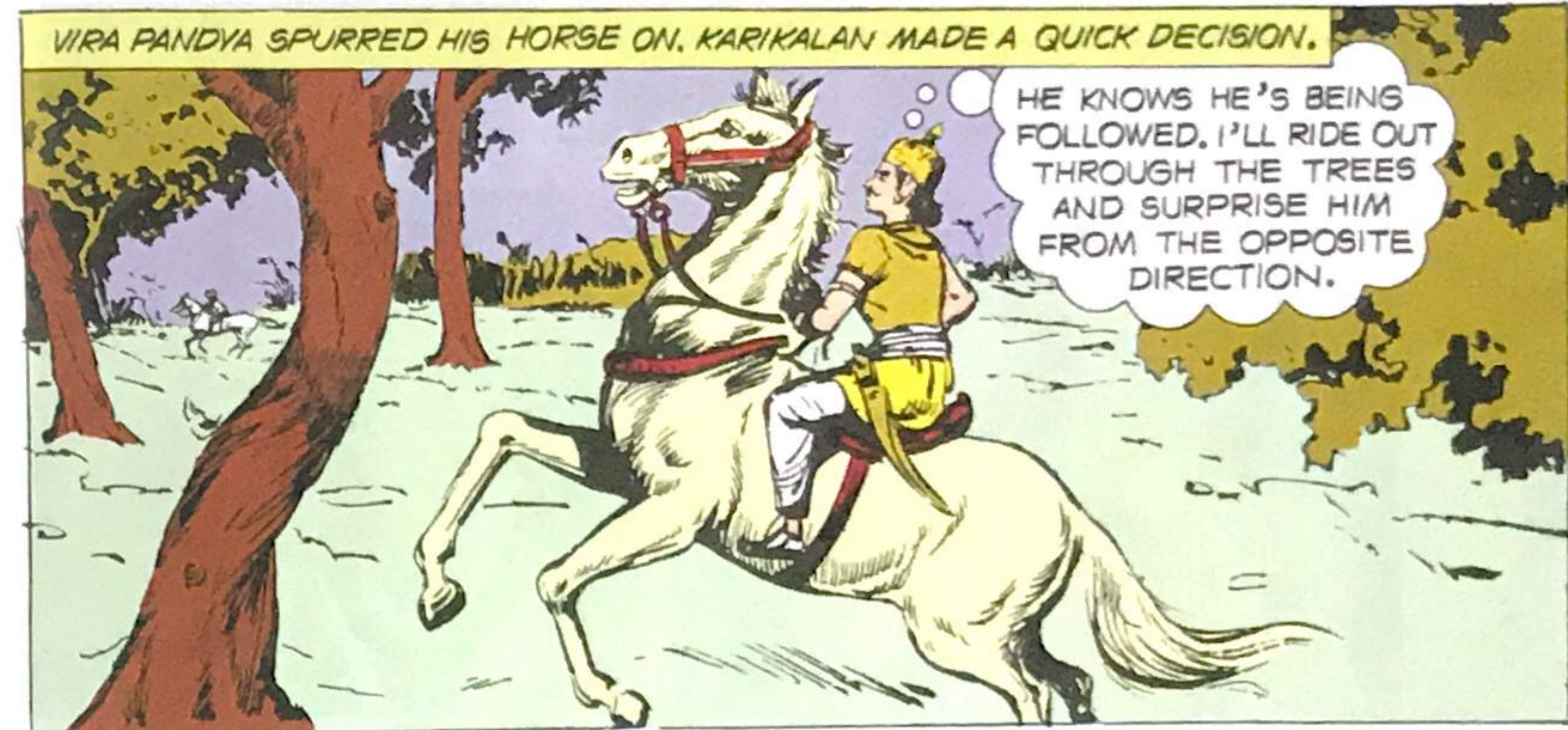
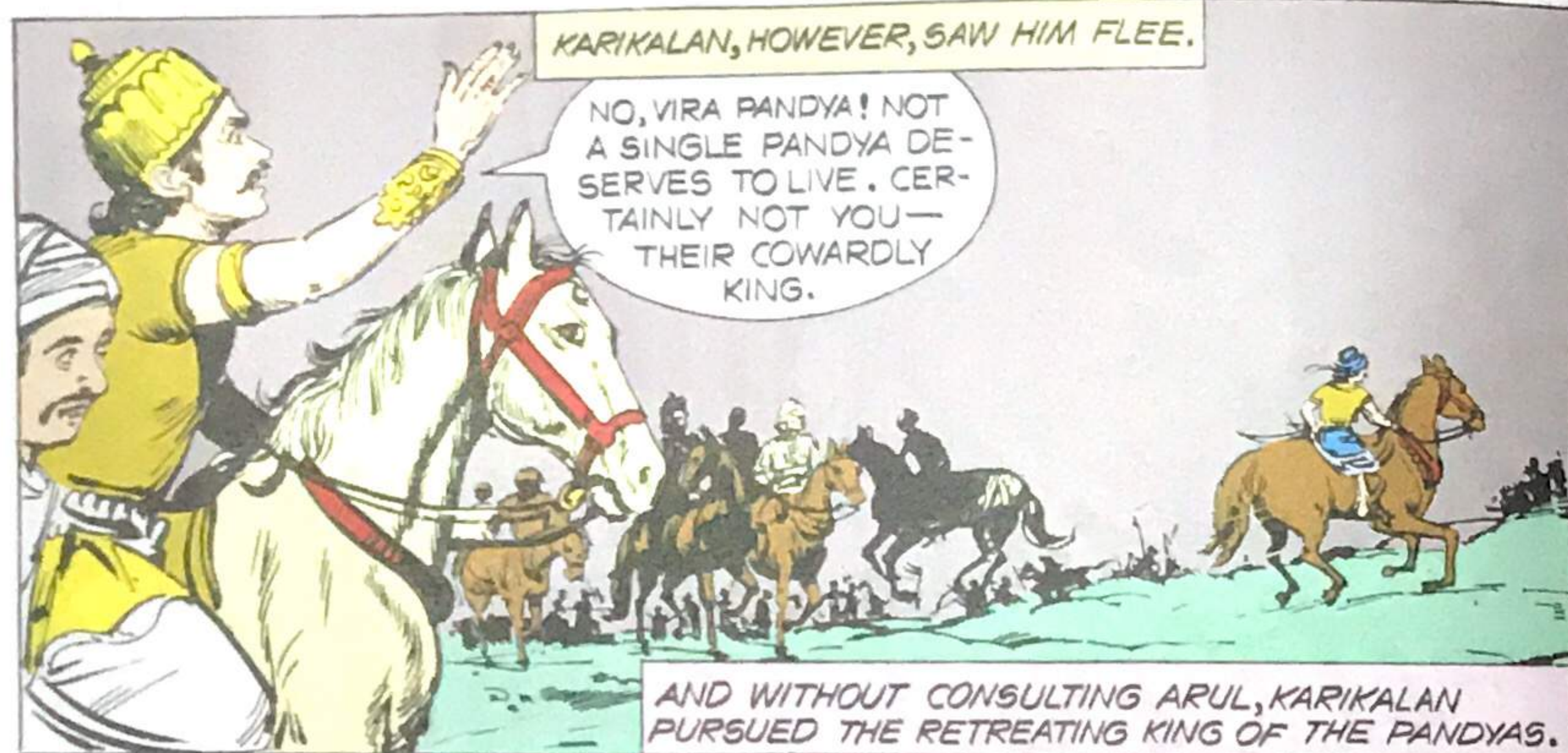
OUR MEN ARE BRAVE BUT WE ARE OUTNUMBERED. O GOD, LET US NOT SUFFER DEFEAT.



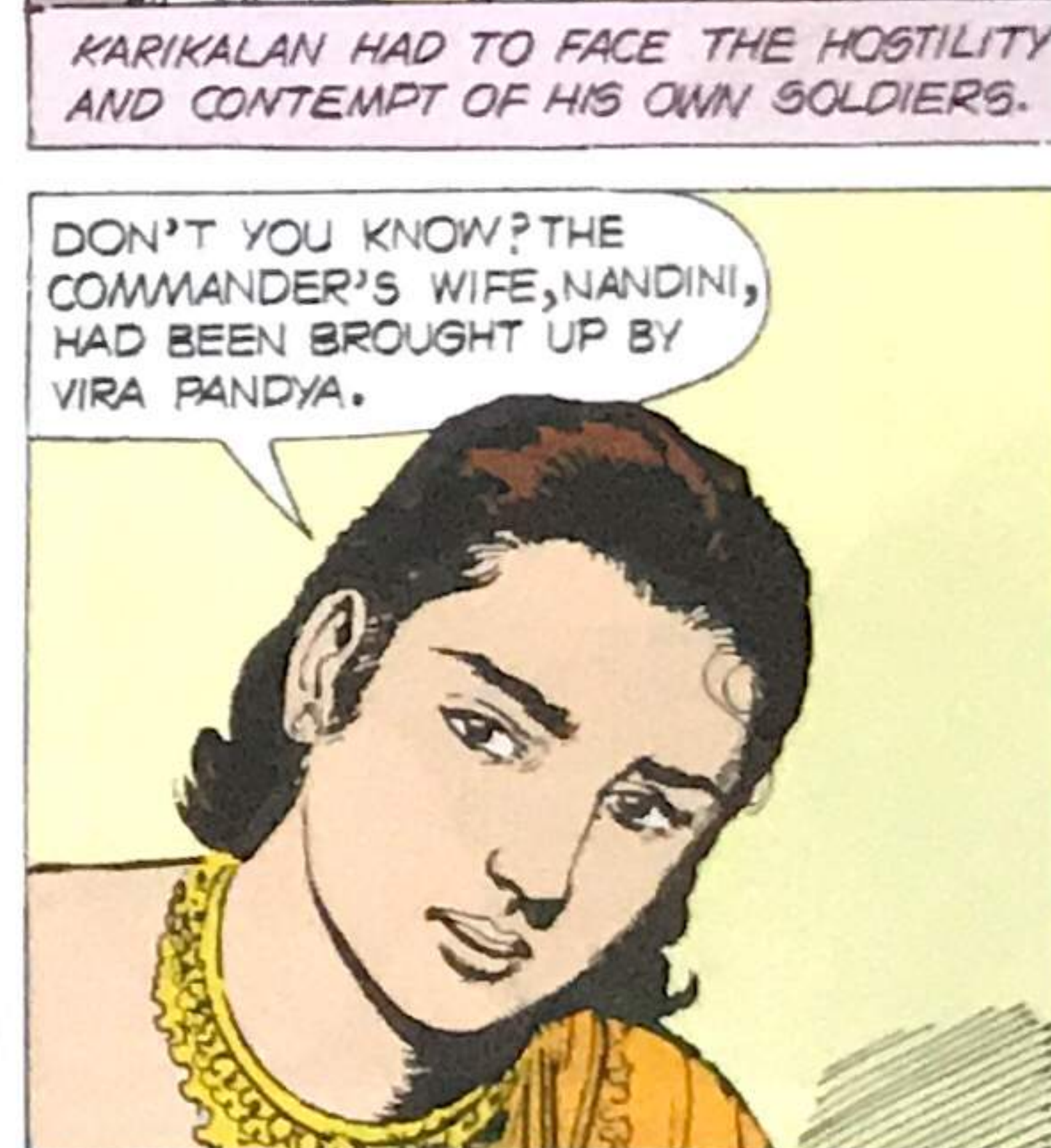
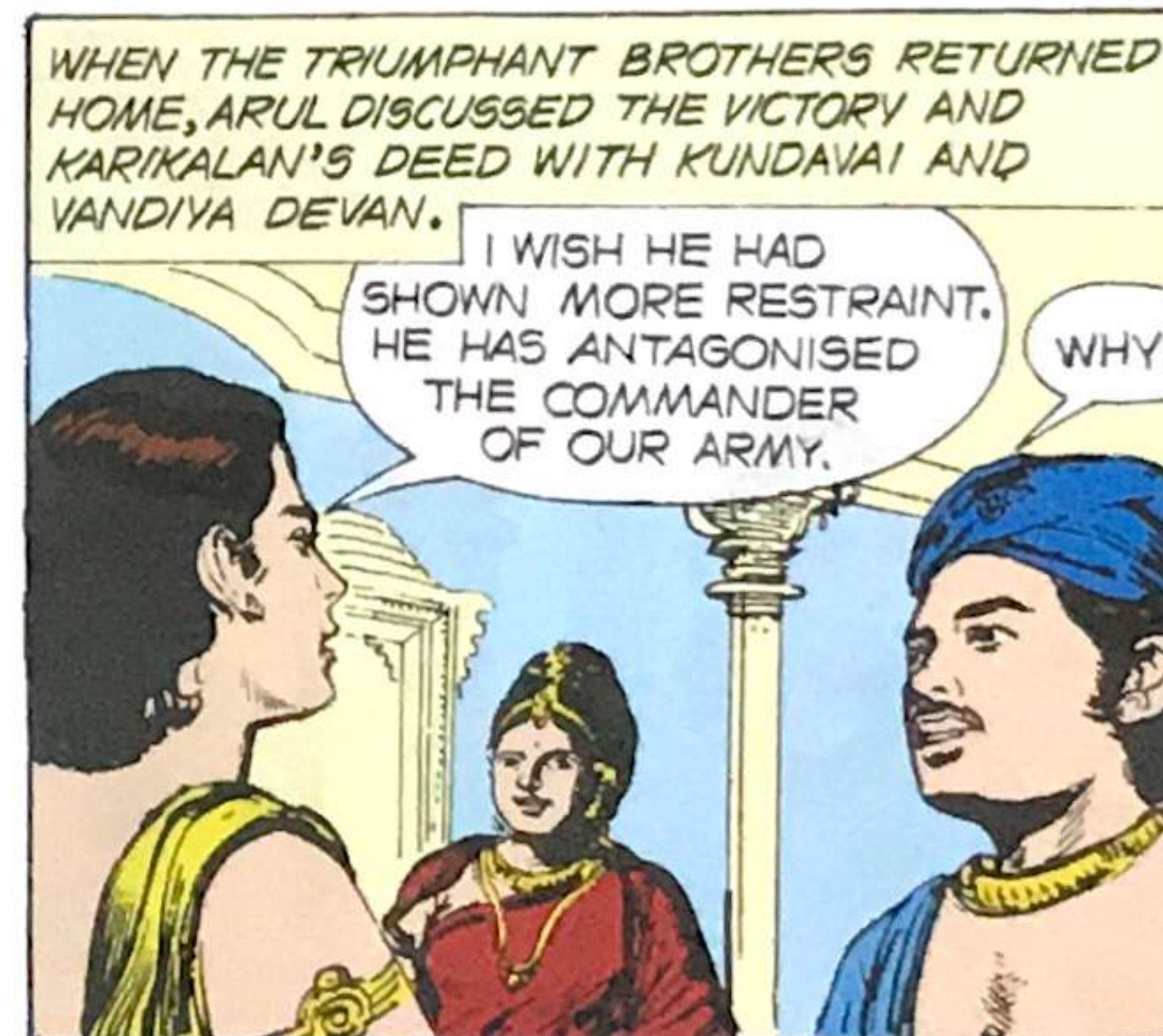
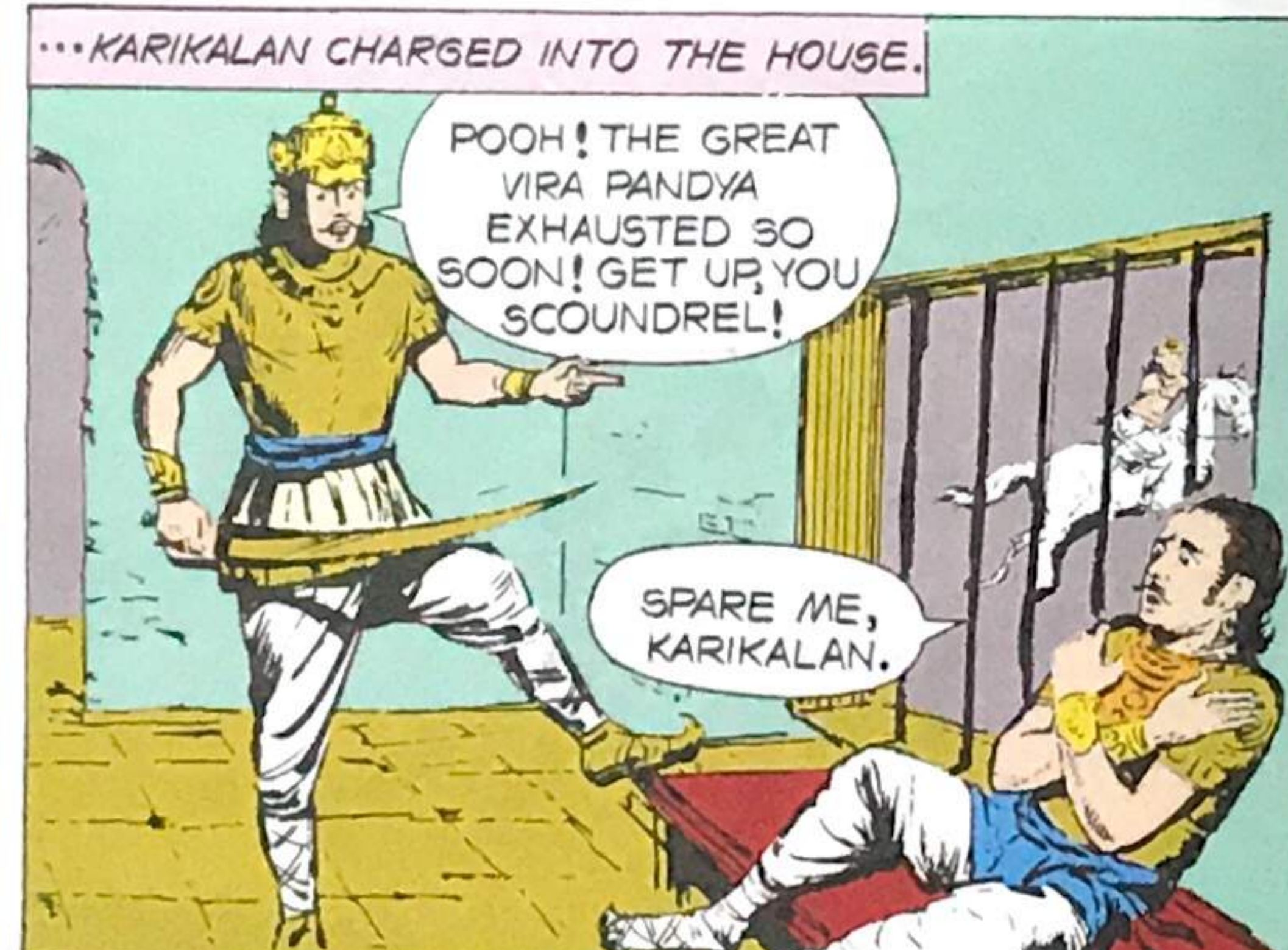
TOWARDS SUNSET, HOWEVER, THE CHOLA ARMY GOT THE UPPER HAND AND DECIMATED THE PANDYA FORCES. VIRA PANDYA LOST HOPE.

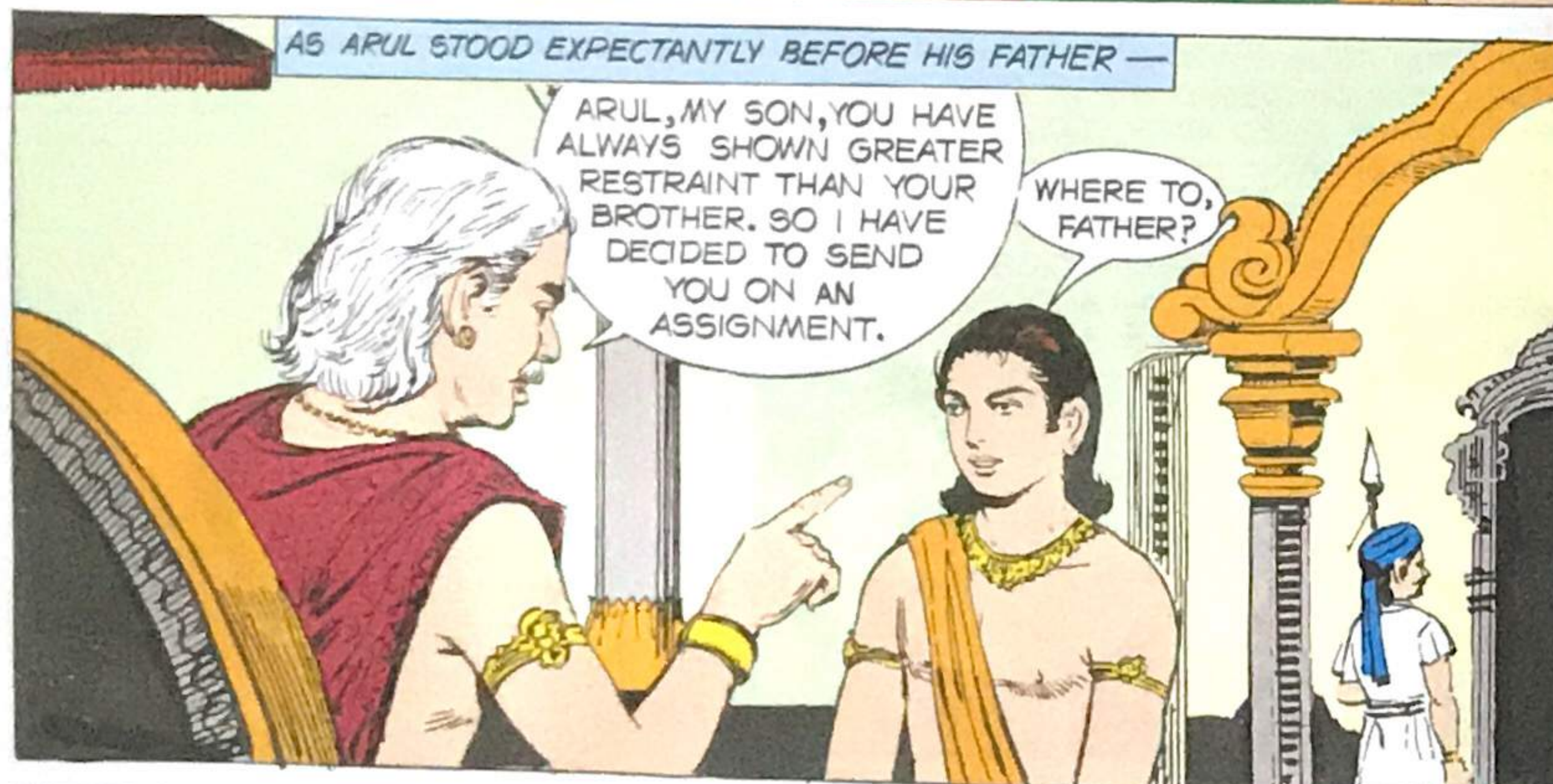
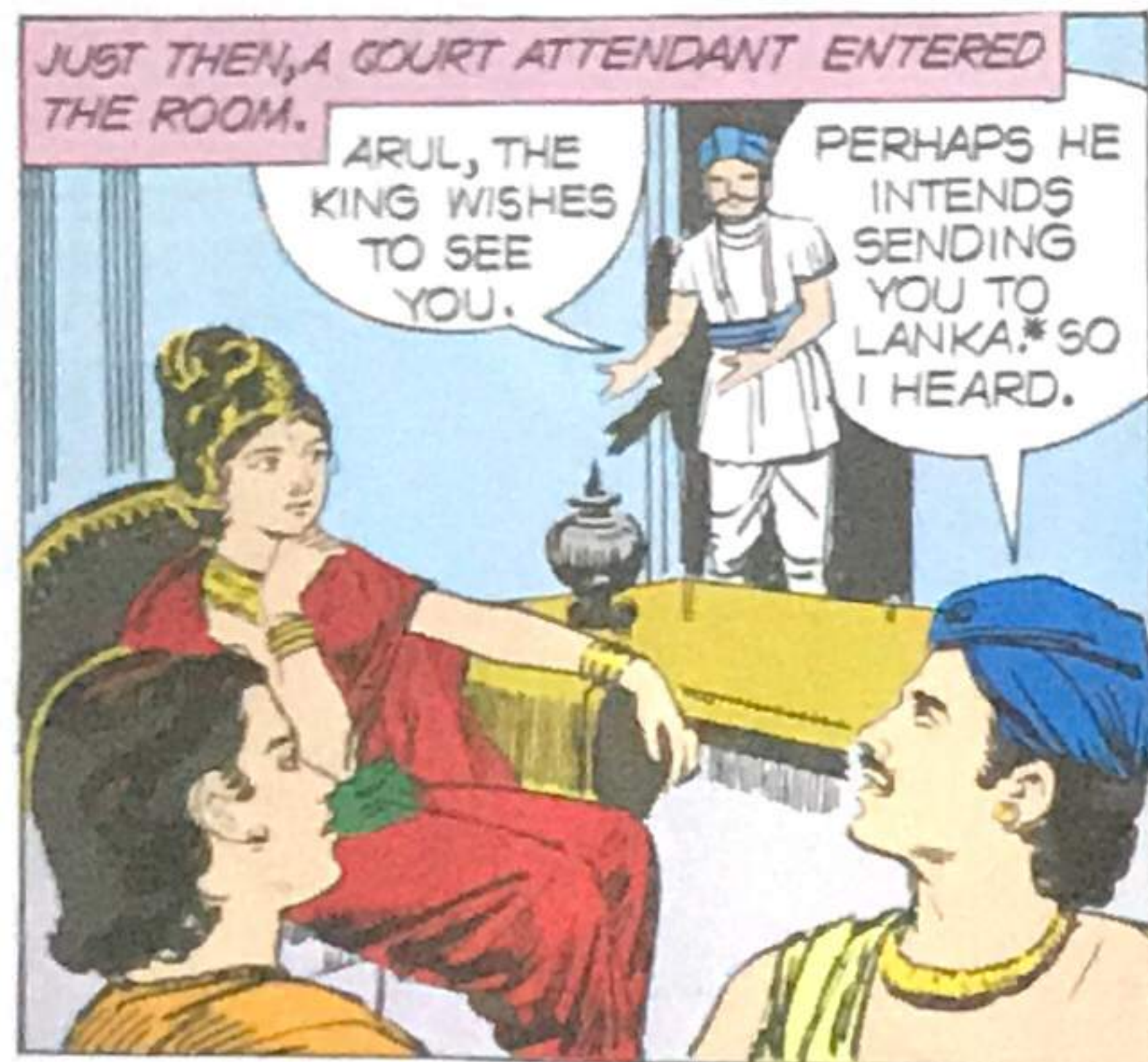
THERE'S NO POINT IN CONTINUING THE BATTLE. I'D BETTER ESCAPE.



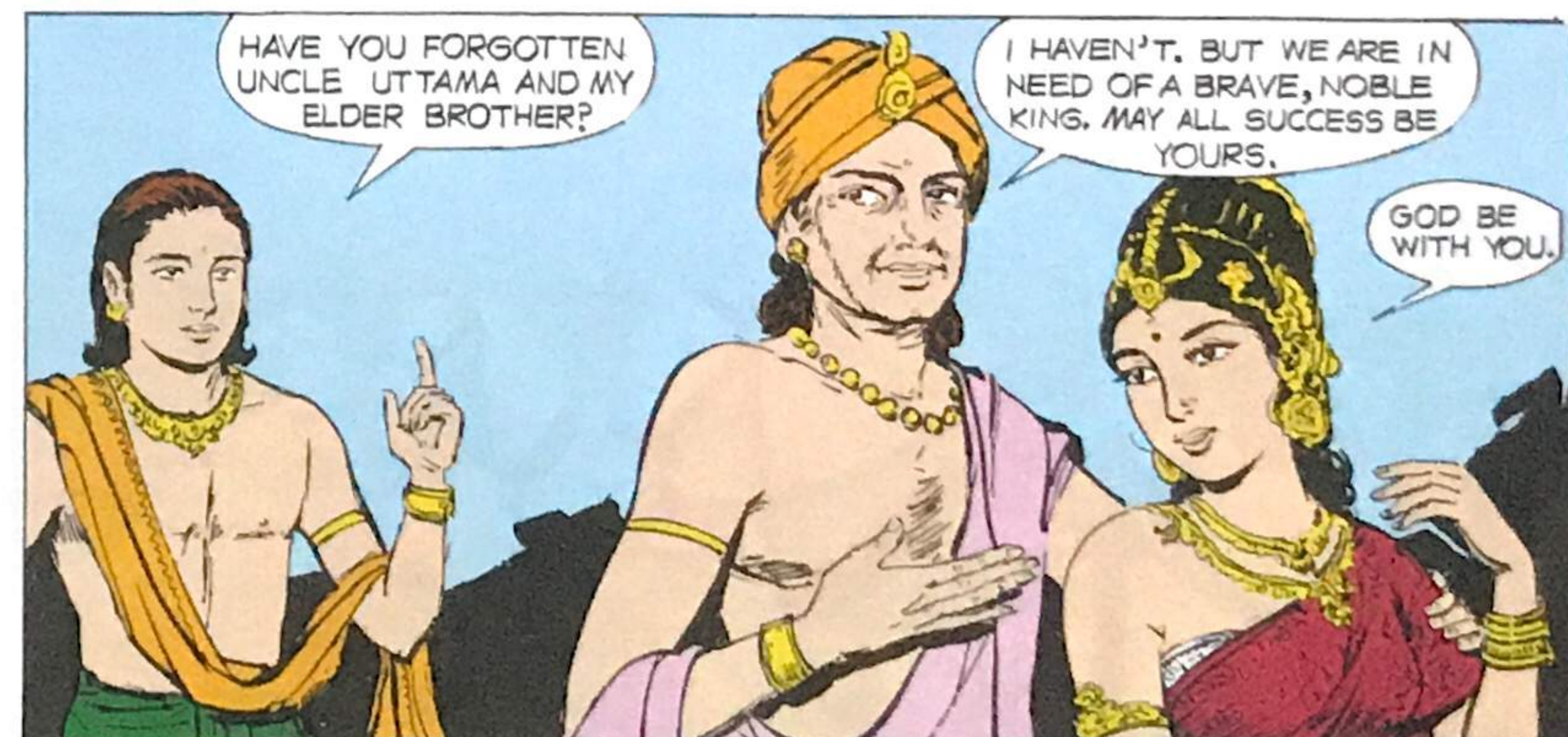


A FEW MINUTES LATER, KARIKALAN RODE UP AND DISMOUNTED.

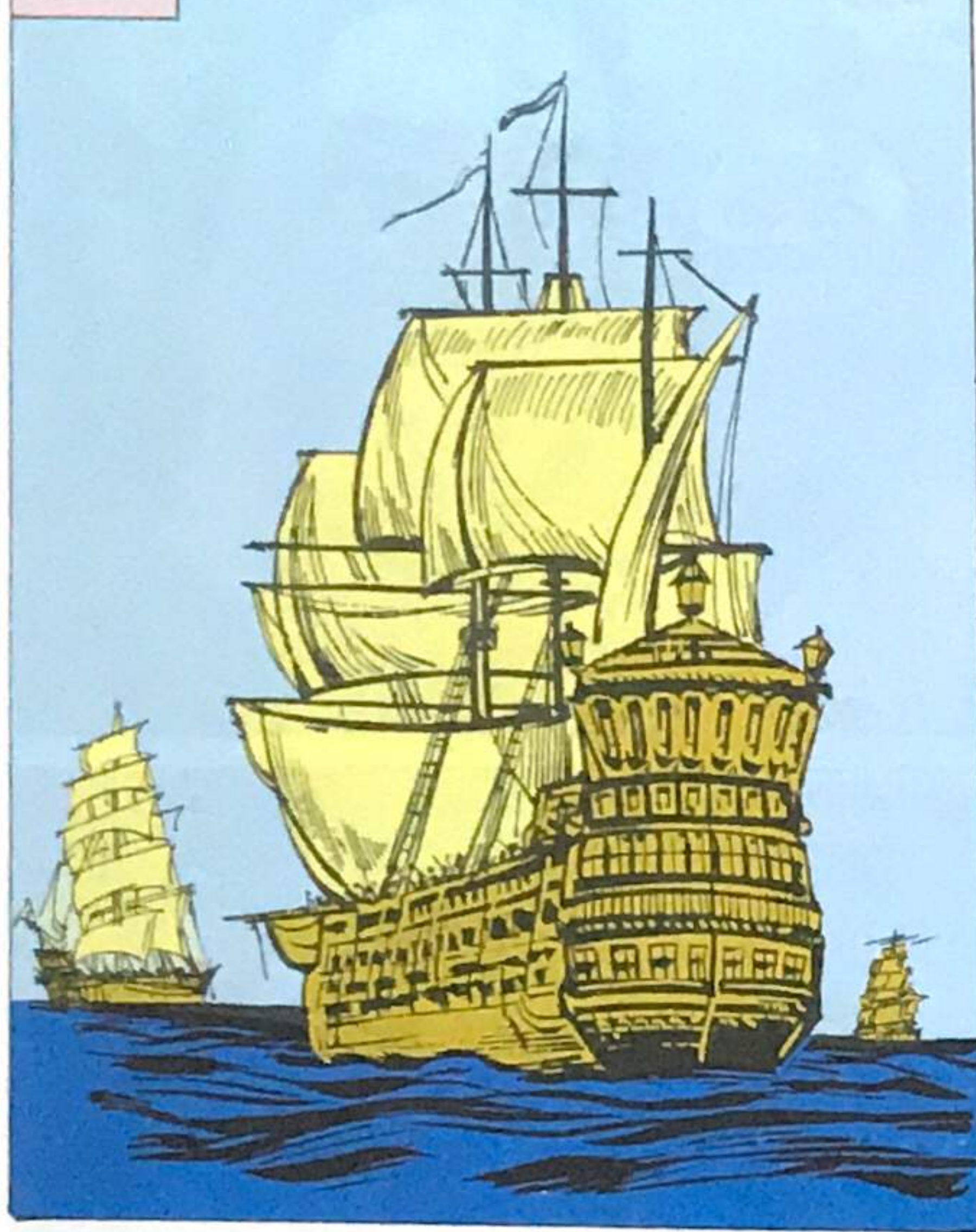




* THE ISLAND OF CEYLON NOW KNOWN AS SRI LANKA.



THE NEXT DAY, ARUL AND HIS MEN SET SAIL FOR LANKA.

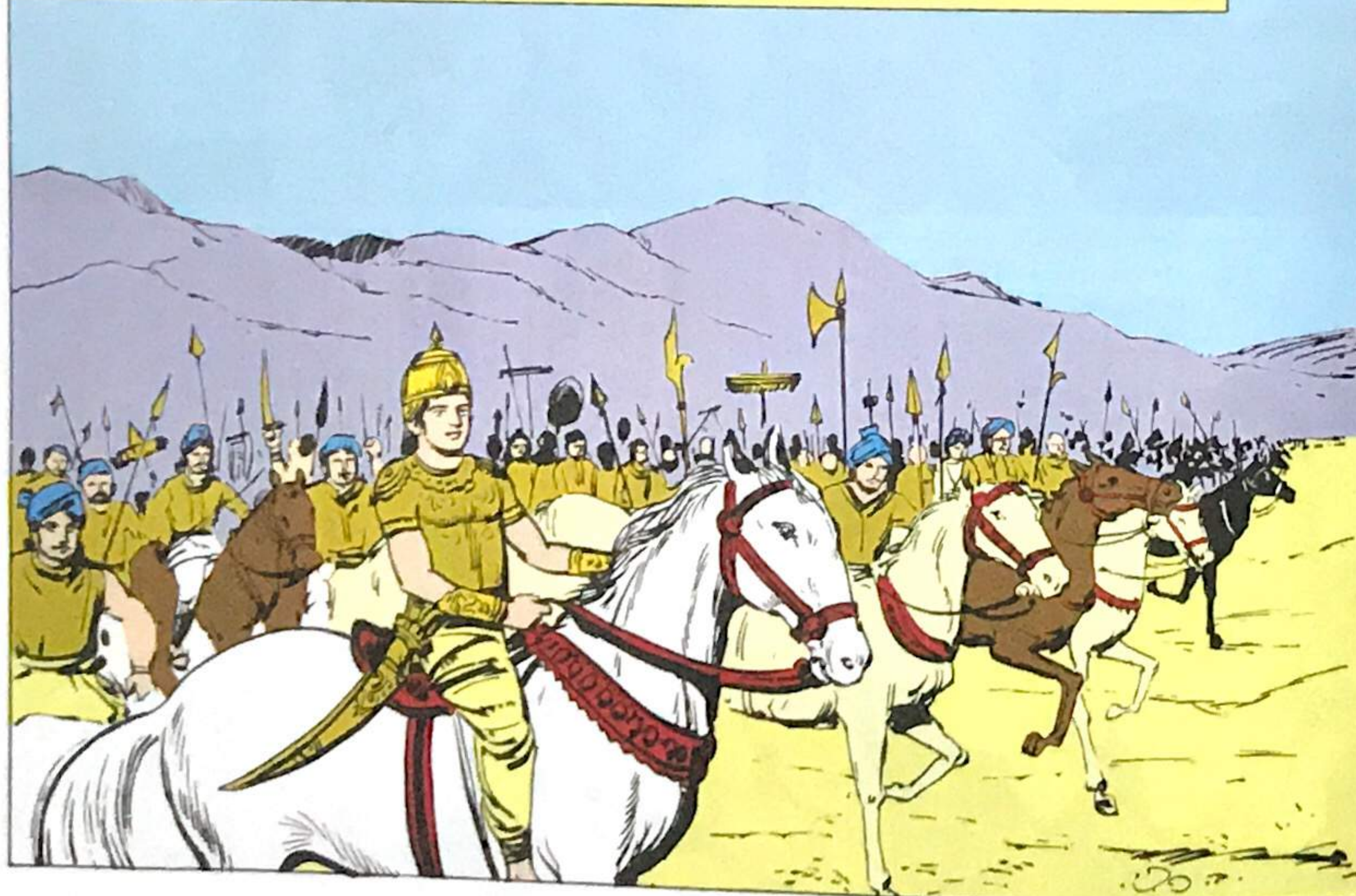


AT LANKA —

TOMORROW WE ATTACK. LET US GET ALL THE REST WE CAN TONIGHT. GOOD-NIGHT, MY MEN.

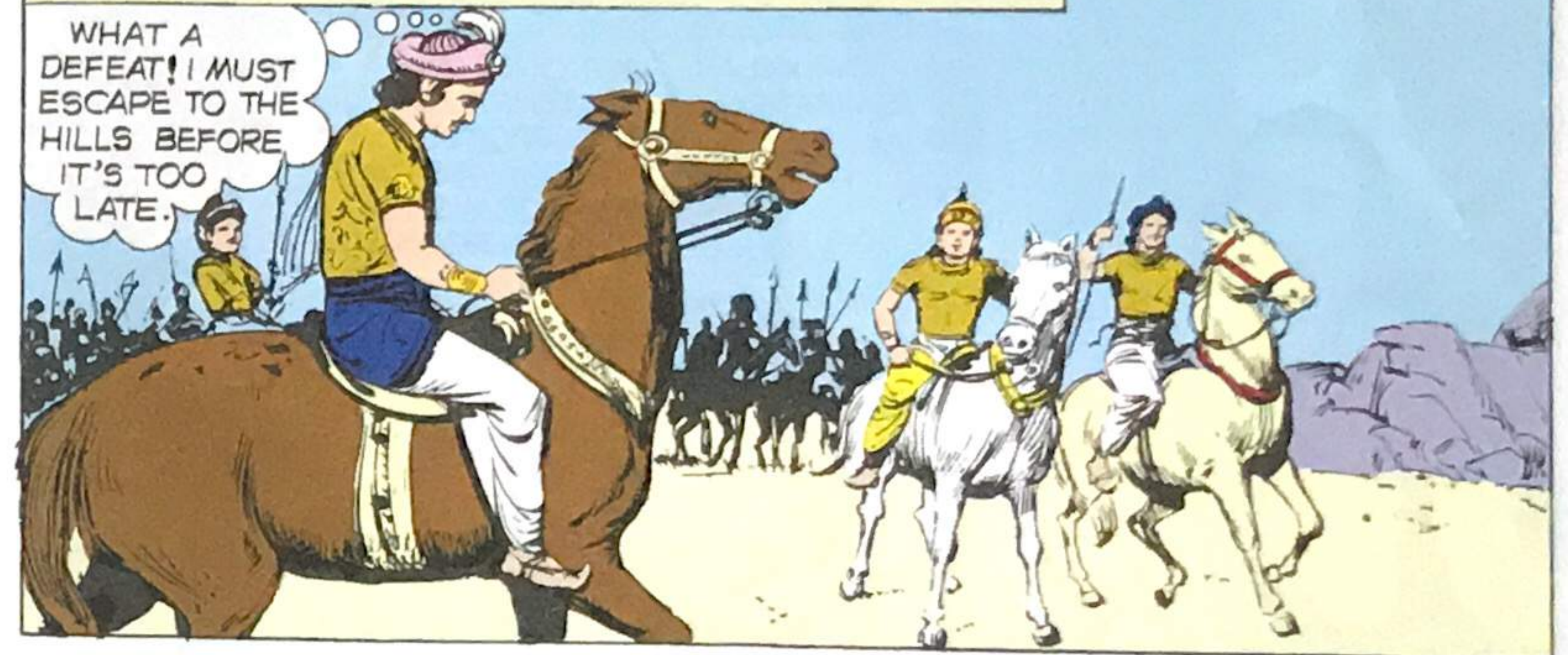


BEFORE DAWN THE CHOLA ARMY ADVANCED UPON ITS UNSUSPECTING FOES...



...AND OVERPOWERED THEM, MAHENDRA DECIDED TO FLEE.

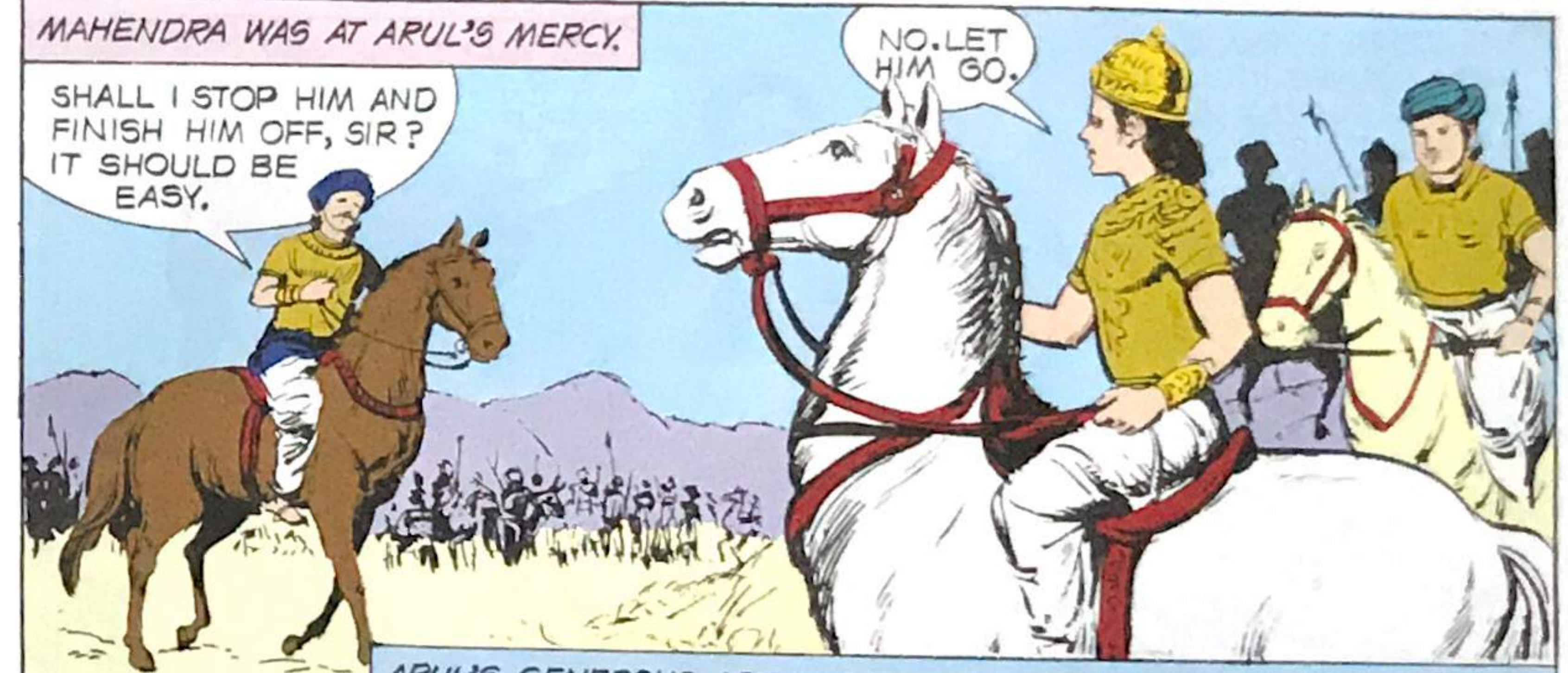
WHAT A DEFEAT! I MUST ESCAPE TO THE HILLS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.



MAHENDRA WAS AT ARUL'S MERCY.

SHALL I STOP HIM AND FINISH HIM OFF, SIR? IT SHOULD BE EASY.

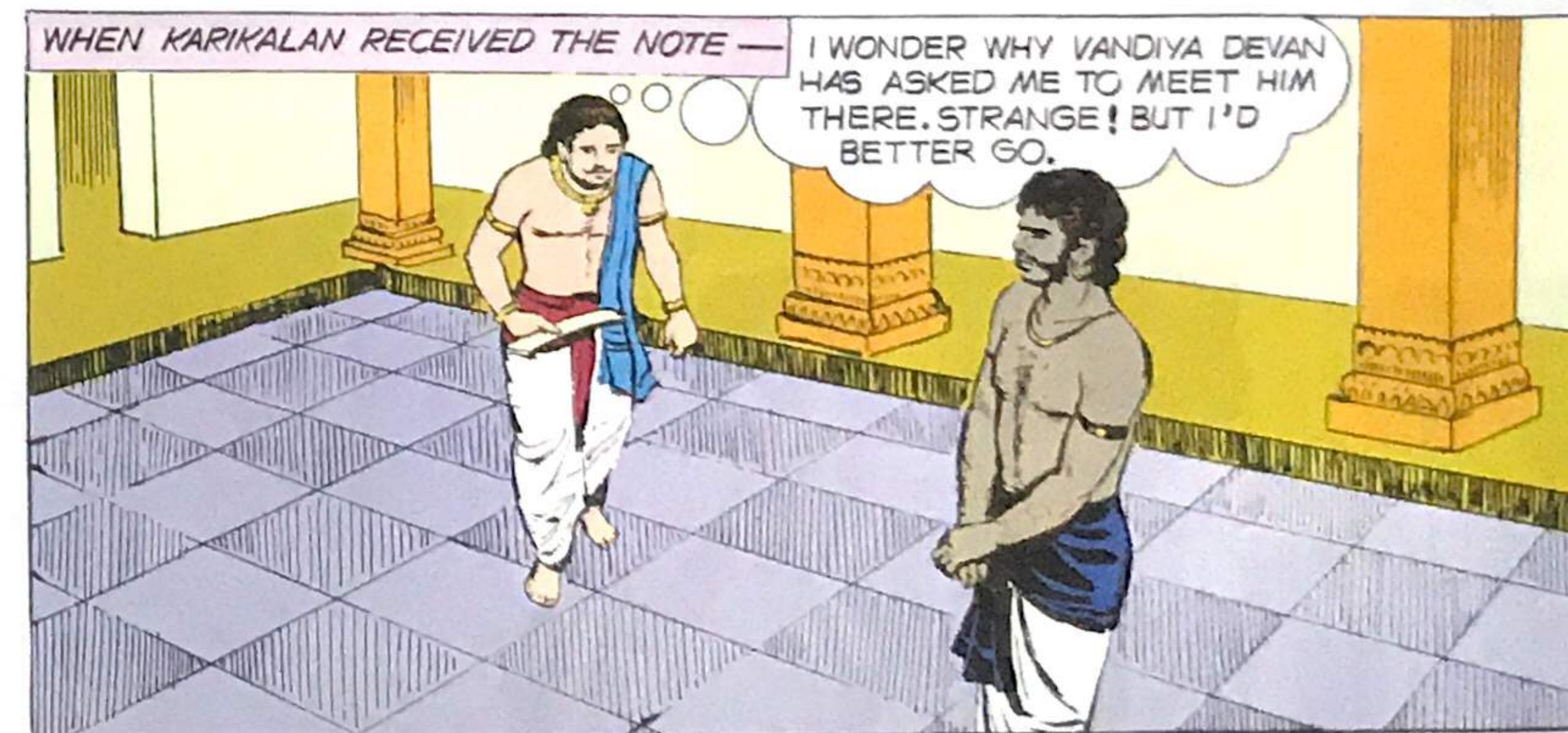
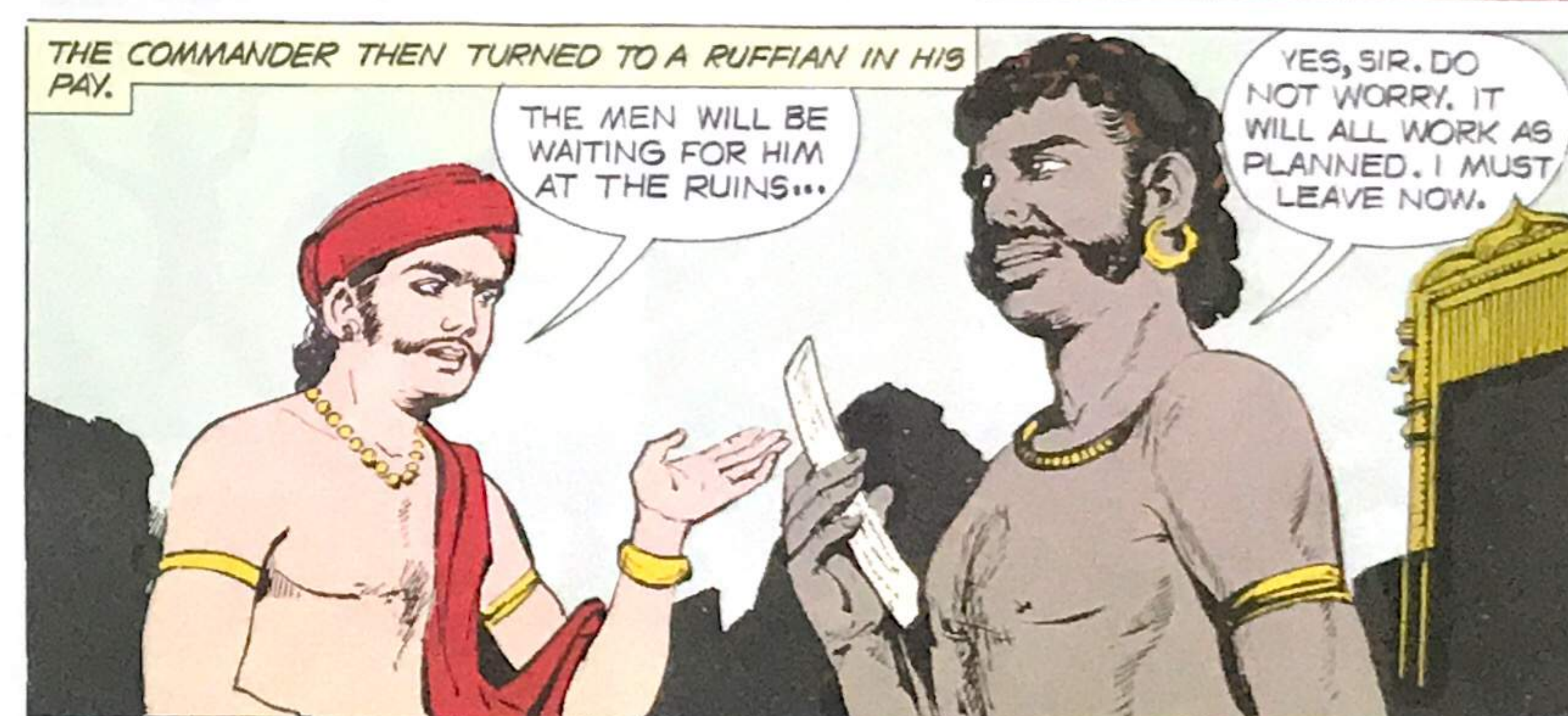
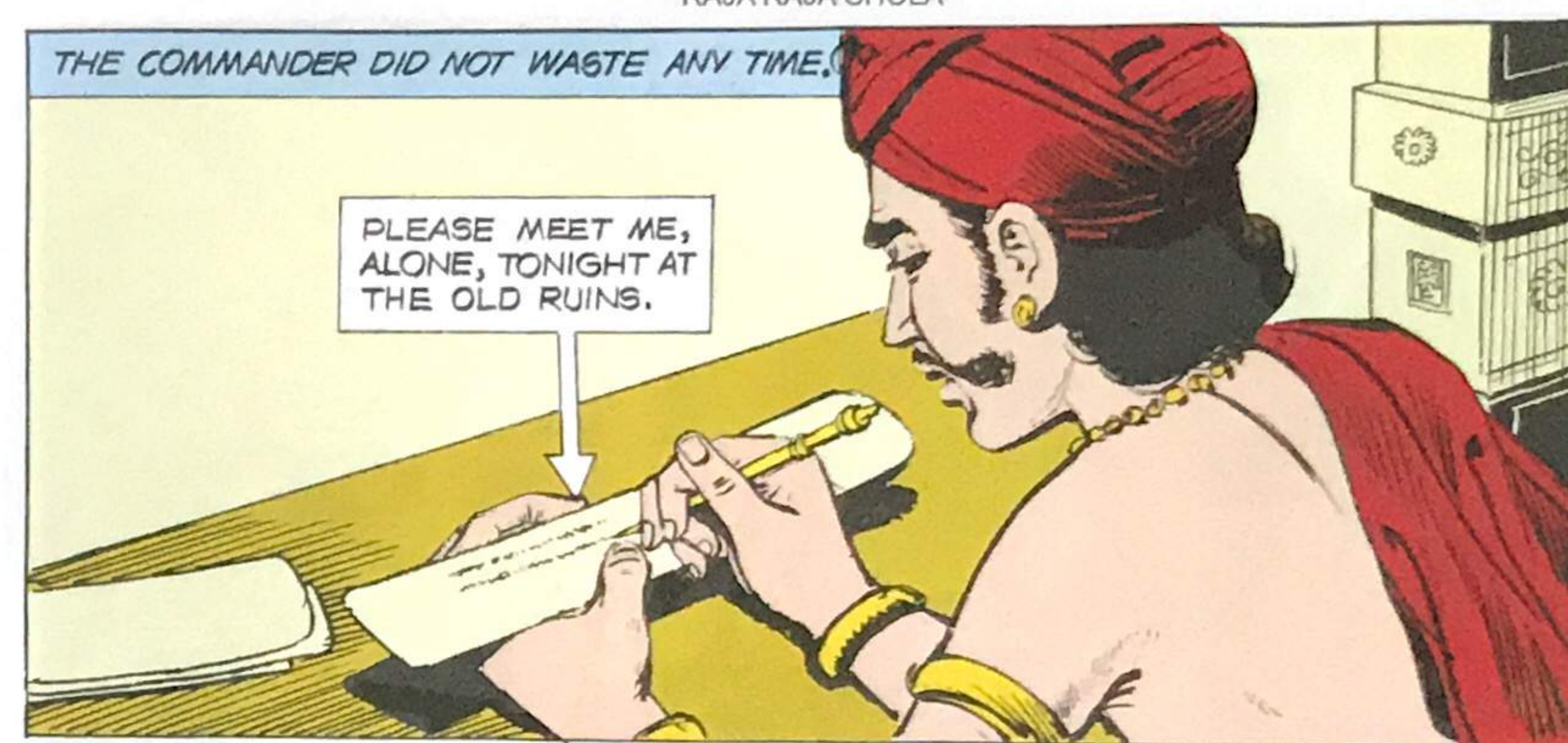
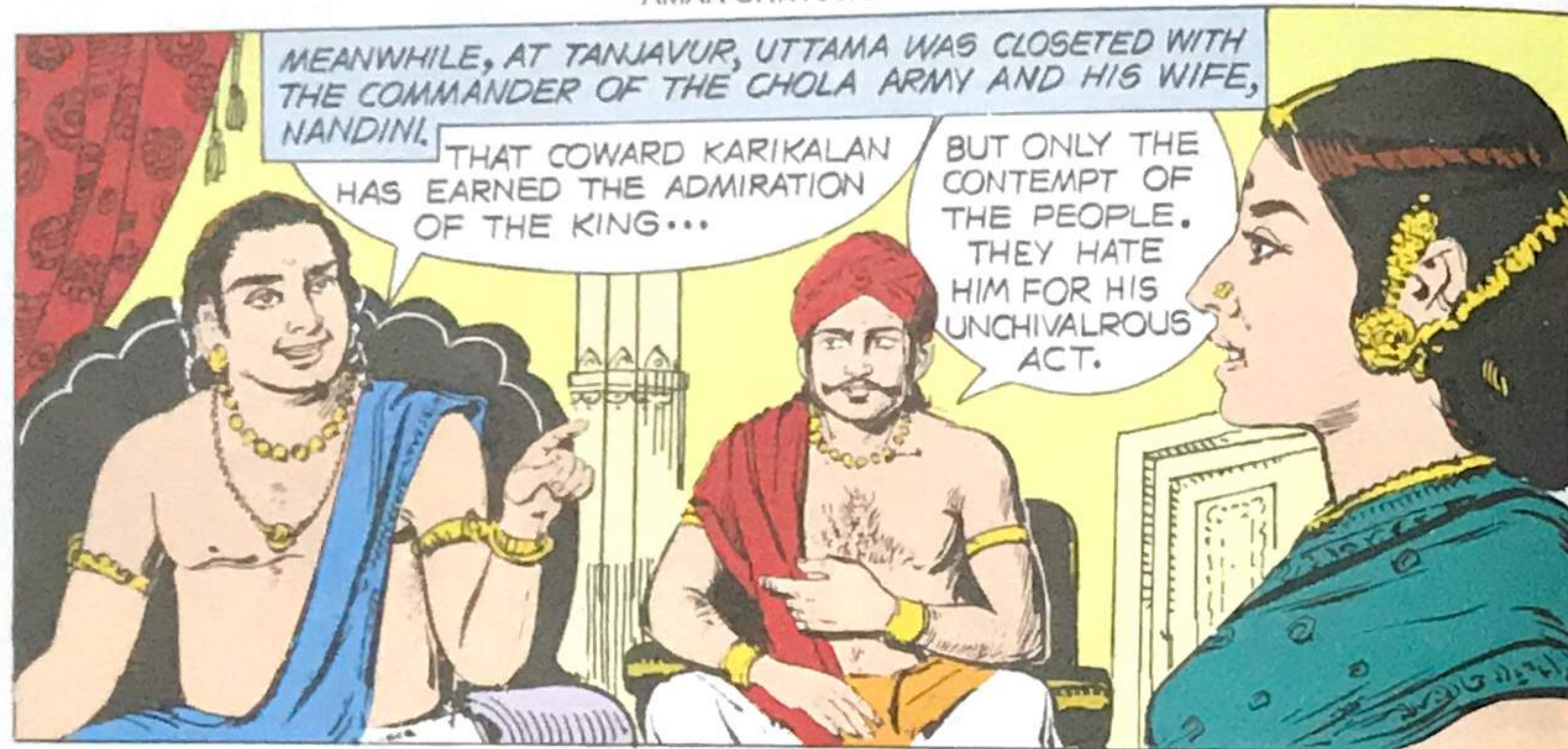
NO. LET HIM GO.



ARUL'S GENEROUS ACT MADE HIS SOLDIERS ADMIRE HIM EVEN MORE.

WHAT WE NEED IS A KING OF HIS STATURE. BRAVE AND STRONG YET COURTEOUS, KIND AND CHIVALROUS. HE BREATHES NOBILITY.





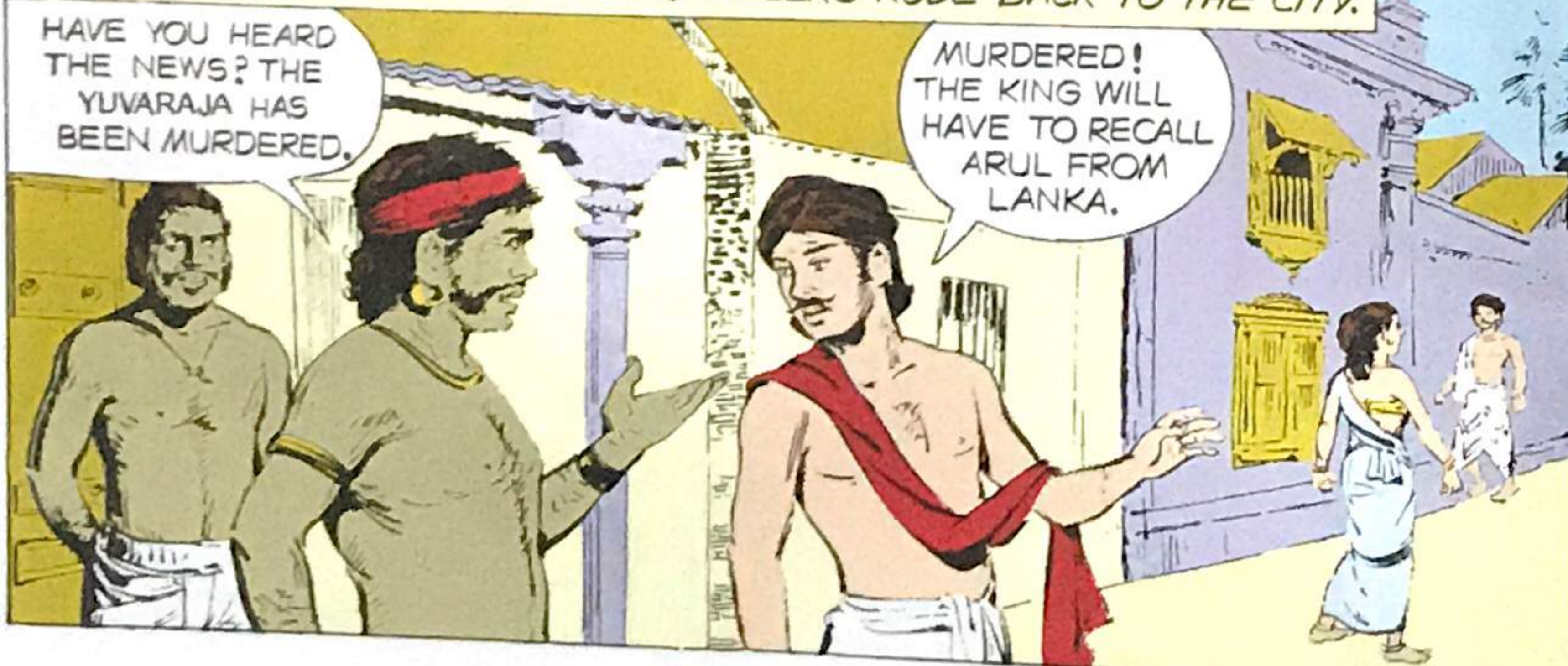
THAT NIGHT, AS KARIKALAN WAITED AT THE RUINS—



THOUGH THEY HAD SPOKEN IN WHISPERS, KARIKALAN'S EARS WERE SHARP.

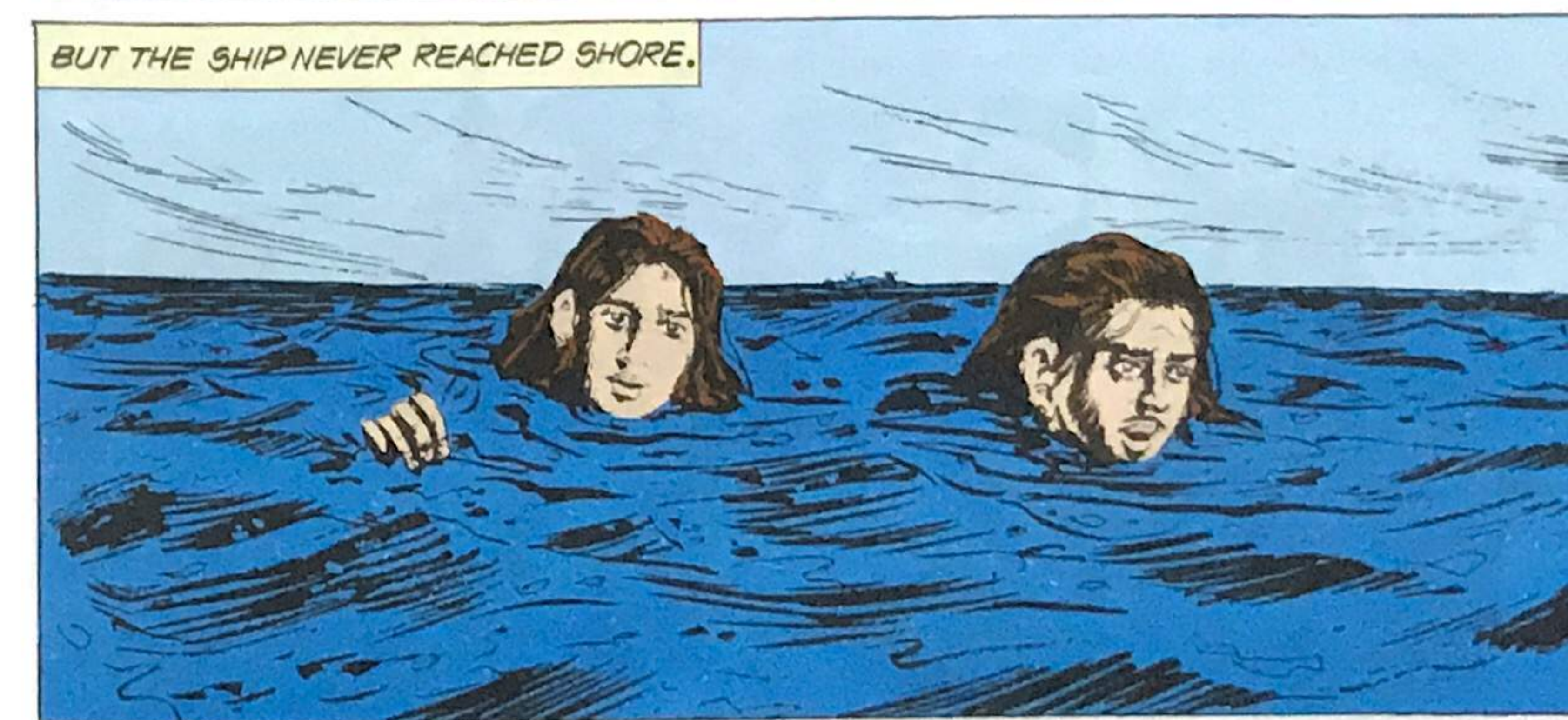
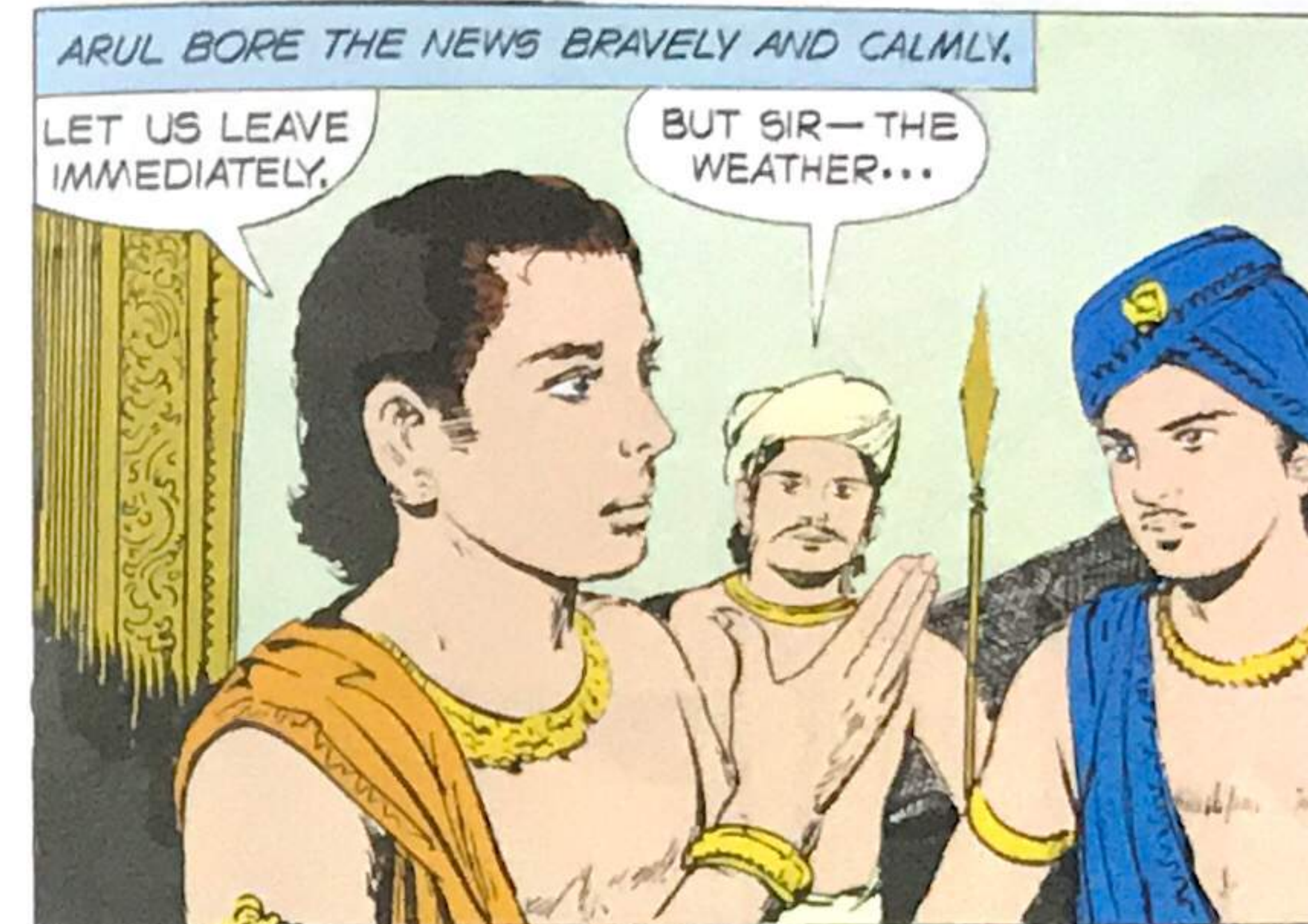


IT WAS DAWN WHEN THE RUTHLESS KILLERS RODE BACK TO THE CITY.



THE NEWS SOON REACHED THE PALACE.





ARUL AND VANDIYA DEVAN, HOWEVER, SURVIVED AND TOOK SHELTER WITH SOME BUDDHIST MONKS AT NAGAPATTINAM.

